

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
P O O R;

THEIR  
RIGHTS, DUTIES, AND THE  
LAWS RESPECTING THEM.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

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By THO. RUGGLES, Esq. F.A.S.

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V O L. II.

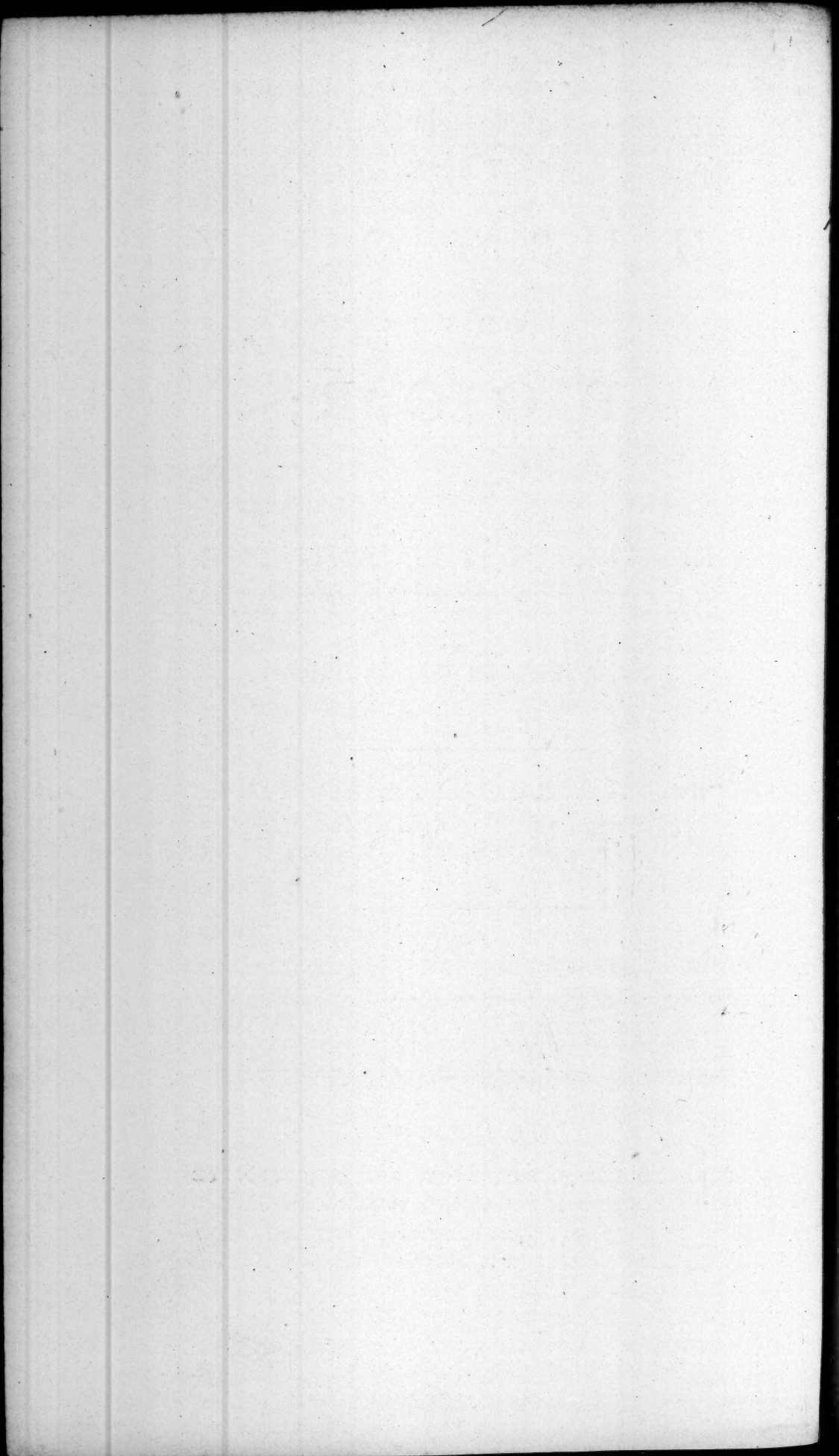
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# L E T T E R S

## ON THE POOR;

THEIR

RIGHTS, DUTIES, AND THE  
LAWS RESPECTING THEM.

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### L E T T E R XXIV.

**I**N 1767, the Farmer's Letters to the People of England appeared, which, among a variety of topicks, treated with much spirit and strength of argument, afford a few strictures on the poor and the laws respecting them; the prevailing ideas shall be shortly mentioned, although the propriety and justness of them cannot be fully admitted.

The author considers the poor laws of England as universally encouragers of idleness,

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B

drunkenness,

drunkenness, and tea drinking ; he wishes for a total abolition of them, and for a new code, on the principle, that those only should be maintained at the public expence who cannot maintain themselves ; and that such maintenance should be in hundred houses of industry.

Is it not the principle of the existing code, that those only who cannot maintain themselves, should be maintained at the public expence ? And if the parishes agree in thinking them adviseable, may not hundred houses of industry be now the means ? Why then abolish the old laws to make new ones on the same principle ? Would a man of sense pull down a family mansion, in good repair, to build a new one on the same principle ? Surely not.

A prevailing idea, in this publication, seems to be, that the poor should have no certainty of provision, except from their own industry ; —but is not such the theoretic principle of the existing poor laws, as far as is consistent with humanity ? If practice has departed from the principle, blame the execution of the laws, and not the principle.

Dr.



Dr. Price's Observations on Reversionary Payments, Annuities, &c. were published in 1772; the principle of some of those useful societies, called box-clubs, originated from a plan intended for the benefit of the labouring poor in this very excellent publication; the following is the calculation alluded to.

“ Let the society, at its first institution, consist of a hundred persons, all between the age of thirty and forty, whose mean age may, therefore, be reckoned at thirty-six, and let it be supposed to be always kept up to this number, by the admission of new members, between the ages of thirty and forty, as old ones die off; let the contribution of each member be 4d. a week, making from the whole body, an annual contribution of 85l. 17s. Let it be supposed, that seven of them will fall every year into disorders that shall incapacitate them for seven weeks, 30l. 12s. of the annual contribution will be just sufficient to enable the society to grant to each of them 12s. a week during their illness, and the remaining 55l. per annum laid out and carefully improved, at the rate of three and half per cent. will increase to a capital that shall be suffi-



cient, according to the chances of life in the tables, three, four, five, to enable the society to pay to every member, after attaining to sixty-seven years of age, or upon his entering into his sixty-eighth year, an annuity, beginning with 5*l.* and increasing, at the rate of 1*l.* every year, for seven years, until at the age of seventy-five, it will be a standing annuity of 12*l.* for the remainder of life. Were such a society to make its contribution 7*d.* a week, an allowance of 15*s.* might be made, on the same supposition, to every member during sickness, besides the payment of an annuity, beginning with 5*l.* when a member entered his sixty-fourth year, and increasing for fifteen years, until at seventy-nine, it became fixed for the remainder of his life at 20*l.*"

If society has a right to expect from its constituent parts every exertion in their power to maintain themselves, before any individual has a claim for any part of their maintenance on society, in the aggregate; a universal plan, obliging those members who have nothing to subsist on but their labour, to lay up a small part of its produce, while in health, against the day of sickness and want, would be no unjust

unjust obligation, but would, on the contrary, be founded on a strictly equitable principle; and, if the foregoing calculation is right, it would be no inconsiderable assistance in sickness, and through the declining years of age; besides, the plan is easy of execution, and is at present, in many places through the kingdom, executed voluntarily by the poor, being encouraged by the subscription of men of substance; and very good effects arise from it, not only in relief of the poor subscribers themselves, and in relief of the poor's rates, but also in the preservation of good order among the lower classes of society; who, having men of principle for their charitable subscribers, trustees, and directors, are less likely to be incited to insurrections, and disturbances, than those who, having no communication with any classes of men superior to themselves, are easily led on to those riotous proceedings which are a scandal to good government.

Mr. Hanway, in his strictures on the causes of dissoluteness, which prevail among the lower classes of people, laments that the number of country gentlemen is so much reduced, that they can no longer form a body of reserve to

defend the cause of virtue, or furnish the means of its defence; he asks, what is the situation of a free people, when a gentleman of education, of five hundred or one thousand a year, who should be one of their chief guardians, brings himself and family into an expence which requires three times his income; he who might be a sovereign in his own demefne, and look down on what the world calls greatness, is now lost in the mass of splendid vanity, and bewildered in trifles.

With reason might this worthy philanthropist make the foregoing remark; from this cause no inconsiderable degree of the dissoluteness which prevails in the country arises; good examples are of great force, and such the country stands in need of; were the examples which the clergy set in private life, equally moral as their exhortations to their parishioners from the pulpit, even in that case the instances of moral conduct among that class of society to which the labourer looks up with respect, would not be sufficient; they want stronger incitements, and a greater number of respectable examplers; their immediate paymasters and employers are not sufficiently raised



raised above them, and too much mix with them in concerns of interest, to be respected as patrons; it is the hospitable country gentleman, the respected magistrate, who understands, and is attentive to their real interests, that are wanted, as constant house-keepers, in the country; but the presence of such at their country residences cannot be commanded, and will not be voluntarily accorded, unless our huge overgrown metropolis, resembling the poet's greatness, void of wisdom, should meet with the same fate, and

Fall by its own weight.

In the same year, as the two last publications, which have been noticed, made their appearance, there came also from the press an anonymous treatise, called, A View of real Grievances, &c. in which are a few just and pointed remarks, founded on truth and actual observation. "Many small country villages can date the commencement of poor-rates from the introduction of public-houses, which corrupt the morals, impair the health, impoverish and reduce the poor to the greatest penury and distress." But the expences of go-



vernment are so enormous, that the excise is too considerable an object not to be encouraged at all events, and no tax that swells it will be taken off, to save the lower class of people from destruction. This writer is also of opinion, that the laws relative to parish settlements are a very considerable cause of the increase of the poor rates.

Mr. Kent, in his Hints to Gentlemen of Landed Property, is of opinion, that the great increase in the poor rates arises from the rise in the value of the produce of land, which, he says, is full sixty per cent. and that the rise in the price of labour is not above twenty. Another cause is, the disadvantage the poor labour under in carrying their penny to market; formerly they could buy their butter and cheese of the farmer, now they are driven to the shop-keeper; they could formerly have their wheat ground, they are now driven to the miller and baker. The remedy he proposes is, that gentlemen of fortune take on themselves the superintendence of country business; let them act as guardians for the poor, reduce the size of farms, increase the price of labour, and the industrious poor will find a support by  
such

such encouragement; but he professes he knows no law which can force people to be industrious.

This assertion of Mr. Kent's, respecting the advanced price of the produce of the land, compared with the advance of wages, demands proof before it ought to be reasoned from as a principle; and at present it stands a mere *gratis dictum*, as advanced by him. Adam Smith goes more minutely into the question, which requires a decided judgment before consequences are deduced from it; the disadvantages the poor lie under in going with their penny to market, are great; but it is much to be doubted whether, at any time, they could buy the produce of land immediately of the farmer, unless from their master; the quantity wanted by each individual is too small, to suppose that the farmer could allow that loss of time which would be necessary to deal to each one his trifling dole; and if they lay in a stock; waste will make a greater consumption in their earnings, than the advanced price of the shopkeeper.

The first edition of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*,  
appeared

appeared about this time ; a book universally commended for the solidity of its principle, the clearness and accuracy of reasoning it contains, and the fair investigation of the subject which the learned author treats of. Some opinions which respect the poor in this treatise may, therefore, with propriety, be taken as so many aphorisms, and quoted as such ; leaving the reader to trace the deductions this great writer has made, in his own volumes, if he doubts the principles of his judgment. As the axioms on the subject of the poor, which can be collected from these volumes, are scattered throughout the whole work, they shall be inserted as they occur, in turning over the pages of Adam Smith's most luminous tract on the Wealth of Nations.

“ A man must always live by his work, and his wages must be at least sufficient to maintain him ; they must even, upon most occasions, be something more, otherwise it would be impossible for him to bring up a family, and the race of such workmen would not last beyond the first generation. B. I. c. 8.

“ In



“ In Great Britain the wages of labour seem to be evidently more than what is precisely necessary to bring up a family. B. I. c. 8.

“ Lord Chief Justice Hale, who wrote in the time of Charles the Second, computes the necessary expence of a labourer's family, consisting of six persons, the father and mother, two children able to do something, and two not able, at ten shillings a week, or twenty-six pounds a year. B. I. c. 8.

“ In 1668, Mr. Gregory King, whose skill in political arithmetic is so much extolled by Dr. Davenant, computed the ordinary income of labourers and out-servants to be fifteen pounds a year to a family, which he supposed to consist, one with another, of three and an half persons; both suppose the weekly expence of such families to be about twenty-pence a head. B. I. c. 8.

“ The real recompence of labour, the real quantity of the necessaries and conveniencies of life, which it can procure to the labourer, has, during the course of the present century, increased, perhaps, in a still greater proportion than its money price.” The foregoing  
maxims,



maxims, with respect to the wages of labour, are admirably elucidated in chapter the 8th, book the 1st, of this excellent work.

“ Since the time of Henry the Eighth, the wealth and revenue of the country have been continually advancing; and in the course of their progress, their pace seems rather to have been gradually accelerated than retarded. The wages of labour have been continually increasing during the same period; and in the greater part of the different branches of trade and manufactures, the profits of stock have been diminishing. Book 1. c. 9.

“ A little grocer will make forty or fifty per cent. upon a stock of a single hundred pounds, while a considerable merchant, in the same place, will scarce make eight or ten per cent. on a stock of ten thousand: the greater part of the apparent profit on a little stock is wages. B. 1. c. 10.

“ The produce of labour which arises from the leisure particular employments allow of, comes frequently cheaper to market than would otherwise be suitable to its nature. B. 1. c. 10.

“ The property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation  
of

of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable. B. I. c. 10.

“ In Great Britain, the wages of country labour approach nearer to those of manufacturing labour, than they are said to have done in the last century, or in the beginning of the present. B. I. c. 10.

“ The very unequal price of labour which we frequently find in England, in places at no great distance from one another, is probably owing to the obstruction which the law of settlements gives to a poor man, who would carry his industry from one parish to another, without a certificate. B. I. c. 10.

“ To remove a man who has committed no misdemeanor from the parish where he chuses to reside, is an evident violation of natural liberty and justice. The common people of England, however, so jealous of their liberty, but, like the common people of other countries, never rightly understand in what it consists, have now, for more than a century, suffered themselves to be exposed to this oppression, without a remedy. Though men of reflection also have sometimes complained of the law of settlements, as a public grievance,  
yet

yet it has never been the object of any general popular clamour, such as that against general warrants; an abusive practice undoubtedly, but such an one as was not likely to occasion any general oppression. B. I. c. 10.

“ The obstruction which corporation laws give to the free circulation of labour, is common to every part of Europe. That which is given to it by the poor laws, is, so far as I know, peculiar to England; it consists in the difficulty in which a poor man finds in obtaining a settlement, or even in being allowed to exercise his industry in any parish but that to which he belongs. B. I. c. 10.

“ The complaint of workmen, that rating of wages by act of parliament, puts the ablest and most industrious upon the same footing with an ordinary workman, seems perfectly well founded. B. I. c. 10.

“ The money price of coarse cloth in the fifteenth century, compared with the money price at present, cloth is cheaper now than formerly, and probably much better. B. I. c. 11.

“ The same comparison is made with respect to stockings, and to the same effect:—  
a pair



a pair of stockings for a poor servant did then cost as much as a bushel and half of wheat. B. I. c. II.

“ Neither wind nor water mills of any kind were known in England so early as the beginning of the sixteenth century.” B. I. c. II.

This assertion cannot be intended to extend to corn mills; and yet, by the wording of the sentence, it extends to wind and water mills of all kinds; it should, therefore, be qualified in a future edition: water mills most certainly were in use before the conquest, although the first instance of the writ *sesta ad molendinum* appears, by Fitzherbert's *Natura Brevium*, to have issued in the 29th of Edward the Third.

“ All those improvements in the productive powers of labour, which tend directly to reduce the real price of manufactures, tend indirectly to raise the real rent of land. B. I. c. II.

“ The whole annual produce of the land and labour of a country, or what comes to the same thing, the whole price of that annual produce, naturally divides itself into three parts,



parts, the rent of land, the wages of labour, and the profits of stock, and constitutes a revenue to three different orders of people; to those who live by rent, to those who live by wages, and to those who live by profit. B. I. c. II.

“ The interest of those who live by wages, is as strictly connected with the interest of the society, as those who live by rent. B. I. c. II.

“ The wages of the labourer are never so high as when the demand for labour is continually rising, or when the quantity employed is every year increasing considerably; when this real wealth of the society becomes stationary, his wages are soon reduced to what is barely enough to enable him to bring up a family, or to continue the race of labourers; when the society declines, they fall even below this. B. I. conclusion of c. II.

“ The proportion between the price of provisions in Scotland and England, is the same now as before the great multiplication of banking companies in Scotland; and corn is, upon most occasions, full as cheap in England

as in France, although there is a great deal of paper-money in England, and scarce any in France. B. 2. c. 2.

“ It is not the number of ale-houses which occasions a general disposition to drunkenness among the common people; but that disposition, arising from other causes, necessarily gives employment to a number of ale-houses. B. 2. c. 5.

“ The money-price of corn regulates that of all other home-made commodities; it regulates the money-price of labour, which must always be such as to enable the labourer to purchase a quantity of corn sufficient to maintain him and his family, either in the liberal, moderate, or scanty manner in which the advancing, stationary, or declining circumstances of the society oblige his employers to maintain him. B. 4. c. 5.

“ The real value of every other commodity is finally measured and determined by the proportion which its average money-price bears to the average money-price of corn. B. 4. c. 5.

“ A tax on the necessities of life operates exactly as a direct tax on the wages of labour. B. 5. c. 2.

“ But it is different with taxes on luxuries, even on those of the poor ; although these might somewhat increase the distress of disorderly families, and thereby diminish somewhat of their ability to bring up children, they would not, probably, diminish much the population of the country. B. 5. c. 2.

“ Under necessaries, the author comprehends, not only those things which nature, but those also which the established rules of decency have made necessary to the poor ; as linen, soap, leather shoes, in England ; all other things he calls luxuries, without meaning to throw the smallest reproach on the temperate use of them, such as beer, ale, tobacco, tea, sugar, spirituous liquors.” B. 5. c. 2.

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## L E T T E R XXV.

FROM the date of these last mentioned publications, no other tract of any notice appeared, until Mr. Gilbert's exertions in the House of Commons again roused the public attention to this important object ; the schedule



dule of inquiries transmitted by the House to all the magistrates, the clergy, churchwardens, and overseers of the poor throughout England and Wales, compelled a scrutiny into that subject; which having been the concern of every one, had become the care of no one: the result of the inquiry alarmed the public; and their minds were agitated on two very important considerations; the first was, the extent of the evil; a fact established by the returns required by the legislature to the questions asked; it appearing, that a sum exceeding two millions was expended annually for the relief of the poor; and that this sum had increased by hasty strides, being an excess of near one-third of the total expended on the same account eight years before. The other point, on which the public attention rested, was the plan proposed by Mr. Gilbert to remedy this alarming evil: several publications appeared on this topic, which, in general, condemned the means proposed, allowing, at the same time, every merit of good intention to the proposer: those tracts which passed the press, for the purpose only of criticising Mr. Gilbert's plan, may be passed over in

silence, unless they elucidate some principle on the subject of the laws, or management of the poor. But, before these publications are noticed, it may be proper to give a summary abstract of the bill which Mr. Gilbert offered to the legislature of his country to be passed into a law, and which he introduced to the attention of the public, by a pertinent and sensible pamphlet, well calculated to explain the evils he wished principally to regulate, and the means by which he intended to correct them.

The bill, by its preamble, stated the fact that gives rise to the regulations proposed: "That the rates and assessments for the employment and relief of the poor have, for many years, been greatly increasing; notwithstanding which, many sick and impotent persons are left to perish, or endure great necessities for want of timely and effectual assistance; and others who are healthy and able to work, are not properly employed, but are permitted to contract habits of idleness, and at length to become vagrants and thieves."

It then proceeds to state the remedy, intended to be passed into a law by the legislature,

ture, viz. the uniting and incorporating several parishes for the purpose of maintaining and employing their poor, upon one common fund, under the direction and superintendence of gentlemen of character and fortune, residing in or near such parishes, and employing permanent able officers and agents for the purpose.

This method, the preamble states to have been found, by experience, better to answer the purpose than any other mode \*.

The enacting clauses contain the means proposed to carry this system into execution; the following are the heads of those clauses very briefly stated:

Justices at quarter sessions to appoint a day for chusing commissioners, who are to take an oath prescribed, and chuse a chairman, and appoint a clerk and two agents, and receive information on oath from high constables, churchwardens, overseers, &c. and shall unite the parishes into distinct districts, not exceeding thirteen parishes in a district, nor less than

\* *The experience* alluded to, most probably, was collected from the instances of the incorporated houses of industry in Suffolk, Norfolk, and elsewhere, throughout the kingdom.



three; but their powers shall not extend into any district whose poor are provided for under any special act of parliament.

These commissioners shall appoint not more than forty, nor less than twenty, committee-men in each district; shall limit their qualification by estate; and shall fix the salary to be paid to the district agent; and the committee-men shall be chosen by such as are qualified in a manner required by the commissioners, who shall also make a report of what they have done in this respect to the justices of the peace of their respective counties; and shall deliver such reports to the clerk of the peace, which shall be printed, and a copy sent to every acting justice of the peace, and to every high constable; and the magistrates, at their quarter-sessions, shall pay, out of the county money, the commissioners their reasonable expenses.

If two-thirds of the persons qualified to be district committee-men, are of opinion to adopt the provisions of the act for incorporating the district, that district shall then be declared incorporated, and shall proceed to ballot for a committee, and elect overseers.

The

The overseers are to return, on oath, the names of such as are qualified to be ballotted for as committee-men; the mode of balloting is described and subjected to certain regulations; the committee-men, when elected, are to take an oath to execute the trust reposed in them impartially.

When the major part of the districts have adopted the provisions of the act, it shall be declared established throughout the whole county or riding.

The district committee-men are empowered to appoint a district agent; they are to forfeit for non-attendance; and each district is to be a corporation.

All the clergy are qualified to be chosen committee-men for the district in which they do duty, for the time being, although not possessed of the qualification by estate.

New committee-men to be elected every year.

Parishes are to choose three overseers, in the manner prescribed by the bill, from whom the committee are to fix on one, who is to be allowed a salary; and, from the time of the ap-

pointment of such new overseers, the duty of the old ones is to cease.

The duty of the new overseers, is to inquire into the condition of the work-houses, and of the poor within their respective parishes; and to make a report thereof to the district agent, and also of all alterations that may happen in any particular, and to obey the orders and commands of the district agent or the district committee.

The district agent is to lay such reports before the district committee, and to inform himself of all particulars with respect to the condition of the poor, as to their maintenance, and employment, &c. which he shall also report to the district committee at every meeting.

The property of all work-houses shall be vested in the district committee, with all the furniture, stock, and instruments of trade, which have been bought and supported by the poor's rates and assessments—which work-houses, &c. they may sell and dispose of, and the money arising from the sale to be applied in aid of the poor's rates.

And



And the district committee are impowered to erect houses of industry, where they cannot purchase or hire convenient buildings for that purpose, and also to purchase or hire land, and to contract for waste or common grounds, with the consent of the lord of the manor.

The district committee to become additional trustees of any sums of money left in trust, to be laid out in the purchase of lands for any infants, lunatics, idiots, &c.; in case the same shall exceed the sum of 20l. until such sums of money are laid out in the purchase of lands; and the money, in the mean time, shall be laid out in the public funds, in the names of two or more persons, one to be named by the persons interested, and the other by the district committee, or any ten of them; and the interest in the mean time to be applied to the use of the persons interested.

As soon as the house of industry shall be fitted up, and furnished for the reception of the poor, in the manner directed by the act; no poor person is to receive any pay, pension, or relief, except in cases of violent sickness or sudden accidents.

Where,

Where, by the laws now in force, magistrates are impowered to proceed on the complaint of the overseers of the poor, with respect to any bastard child, they are then to proceed on the complaint of the district committee.

The district committee is impowered to apply what sums of money they may occasionally think proper, towards paying the weekly contributions of such of the poor as are engaged in clubs and friendly societies, for establishing funds by weekly contributions to their relief and support when disabled by sickness or accidents; and also for the purpose of paying teachers and providing books for the instruction of children at Sunday schools; the district committee is also required to provide a school for the education of poor children.

Every district agent shall, with the assistance of the clerk of the district, keep in a book, an exact account of all expences attending building, furnishing, and providing stores and utensils for the house of industry, and of the maintenance of the people residing therein, and of all other expences respecting the poor; and shall

shall lay a state of such expences every month before the committee ; and shall, in order to fix a proper measure of distribution from the parishes within the district, procure an account of the medium expences of the poor of every parish, within the years 1783, 1784, and 1785, for which returns have been made to parliament, and lay the same before the committee, who are to inspect and examine such returns, and make them as perfect as possible ; and to that purpose they shall be impowered to summon before them such persons as have been parish officers for those years, and all other persons who can give them information on the subject, who are to attend and answer all questions relative to the subject, on oath, under pain of commitment for non-attendance, and of indictment for perjury if they speak falsely.

After the provisions of the act are adopted within any district, the sums to be annually raised for the relief and maintenance of the poor shall not, in any parish, exceed the annual sum so raised therein upon the medium of the said three years. The district agent shall also, at the end of every quarter of a year,  
a week



a week at least before the meeting of the next monthly committee, make an accurate account of the expenditure within the said quarter, and lay it before the said committee, that they may be enabled to make an order for the levying the poor's rates; and the district agent shall also settle the quota of each parish, and lay the same before the committee for their allowance, which shall be notified to the overseers of the parish, who are to assess and collect the same and pay it to the district agent.

And to raise money for buildings, &c. the committee may borrow a sum not exceeding four years poor rates, and assign over the buildings, &c. and all or any part of the poor rates as security for the principal borrowed and interest.

No fees or perquisites shall be received for any business done by virtue of this act, by any agent, overseer, clerk, or others. The appeal to the poor's rates to be to the quarter sessions.

If any district agent, or overseer, on requisition from the district committee to come to account, shall refuse so to do, he shall be committed to the common gaol for a space not exceeding

exceeding fix calendar months, or until he complies. All penalties inflicted by the act shall be recoverable before one justice of the peace.

These are the heads of all the material clauses in Mr. Gilbert's bill; there are some others which relate to the interior regulation of the houses of industry, and also two schedules of the rules, orders, by-laws, and regulations which are referred to by the act; but the whole plan itself, a plan of that magnitude, as to involve in it, consequences, immediately affecting the liberty and comforts of not less than six millions of our fellow-subjects, and a considerable part of the property of the remainder of our countrymen, was overturned, on a motion for the second reading of the bill, by a division of the House of Commons, of thirty-four members who were against the bill, to ten who were for it; only forty-four members being present.

Mr. Acland's plan, for rendering the poor independant on public contribution, stands next in order of time, having made its appearance in 1786,

The

The mode, after Mr. Gilbert's bill failed, he offers to secure that independance to the poor, which he professes to hold out to them, is the establishment, throughout that part of the kingdom subject to the poor laws, of a general society, on the principal of the box-clubs; by which the members become entitled to a certain weekly salary, during sickness or incapacity to work, through accident or old age; on the payment of a certain sum of money weekly.

Another part of the plan he offers, is to secure to the poor their natural right of earning their bread where they are best able to do it, by abrogating the laws respecting settlements.

The only observation I shall at present venture on this subject, is, that box-clubs have been in many places voluntarily instituted by the poor themselves; and experience has proved such institutions beneficial; and that what has in many places been done voluntarily, might, without injustice, become obligatory to all; more especially if such obligation was counter-balanced by their recovering the liberty they have by nature, and  
which



which ought not to be taken from them by the laws of society,—of getting their bread where they best are able.

An anonymous pamphlet, introducing a sketch of a bill for the relief and employment of the poor, appeared the same year Mr. Gilbert's introductory plan was published.

The writer reduces the complaints to two heads; first, the great misapplication of the parish money; second, the general neglect of the parish officers in employing the poor. He also affirms, that an increase of the impotent poor, beyond a certain proportion, is an impossibility, except in case of a pestilential disease; therefore he is of opinion, that the increase of the poor, which is so much talked of; is mere sound, and signifies nothing. He also says, that the only proper objects of charity among the poor, are those who would work, but are not able.

The act he proposes is revisionary of the forty-third statute of Elizabeth; the spirit of which is to the main object of the act proposed; and only such of the regulations in the other statutes are to be adopted as have a manifest tendency to the same principles; but the act  
he

he proposes is, at the same time, undoubtedly *visionary*, for it is to *execute itself*; that is, it must leave nothing to the discretion of those who are impowered to execute it.

*Thoughts on the Cause of the Increase of the Poor*, 1787. This pamphlet asserts, that the increasing burthen of the poor's rate arises from the absorption of smaller farms in greater, and by depriving the poor labourer of a portion of land round his cottage. Whether such an effect could arise from such causes, if they *universally* took place, shall not now be agitated, because it is apprehended the facts are by no means *general*; but the increment of the poor's rate is *universal*; and as considerable in those parishes where the smaller farms have *not* been absorbed by the greater, and where the cottager has *not* been deprived of his *garden*, as where these circumstances *have* taken place.

Mr. Godschall, in his general plan of parochial and provincial police, complains, and with much reason, of the negligent execution of the poor laws, and with great truth and propriety inveighs against the swarm of ale-houses that infest all our towns, and deprave  
and

and impoverish the labouring poor. This pamphlet was published in 1787.

The Rev. Joseph Townsend, of Pewsey, in Wiltshire, tells us that the poor laws, so beautiful in theory, promote the evils they mean to remedy, and aggravate the distress they were meant to relieve.

“ They are not only unjust, oppressive, and  
“ impolitic, but proceed on principles which  
“ border on absurdity, because they say, that  
“ in England no man, even by his indolence,  
“ improvidence, prodigality, and vice, shall  
“ suffer want.”

He says also, that the distress of the poor does not arise from the high price of corn, soap, leather, candles, salt, &c. as will appear from the high price of labour, which has advanced in the proportion of six to four within a century, and for this assertion, refers to Sir William Petty.

That under the present system, the master must either connive at the neglects of his servants, or maintain them without work; that the laws discourage improvements in agriculture; waste lands would otherwise be tilled, as they are exempted from the claims of the



church seven years, but not from the demands of the poor ; that a fixed and certain provision for the poor weakens the spring of industry.

The law of settlements has restrained the poor to their own parishes, where they are regarded with an evil eye, and has prevented them going elsewhere, where they would be received with joy ; parish workhouses disarm the magistrate, and intimidate the poor ; badging the poor is also strongly reprobated ; county workhouses are liable to still stronger objections ; and farming the poor is the top of the climax of oppression and absurdity.

Such is Mr. Townsend's Philippic on the present system of the poor laws, contained in a publication which made its appearance in 1787, in which are many very sensible observations on the subject ; although it is conceived, that very few of those who are in the practice of experiencing the execution of the system, will join in such an unqualified invective.

The reform proposed, is to abolish the whole system of compulsive charity ; to promote voluntary contributions, as in the early days of Christianity ; to encourage industry, œconomy,

œconomy, and subordination ; and to regulate population, by the demand for labour ; to establish work-shops in every parish, to train children to useful labour ; to cause friendly societies to be established and regulated by the legislature ; and, as long as it shall be expedient, to retain a given proportion of the poor's rates, the disposal of which should be wholly at the discretion of the minister, churchwardens, and overseers, subject only to the orders of a vestry ; to lay a tax on horses, to drive farmers to use oxen, which will increase the quantity of food for the poor ; to inclose commons and relieve the poor by voluntary contributions.

The Rev. T. Haweis, rector of Aldwinkle, All-Saints, in 1788, offered a plan to the public, under the title of “ Hints respecting the Poor, submitted to the Consideration of the Humane and Intelligent.” He recommends box-clubs, to which the poor shall all be *obliged* to contribute, not less than one thirty-sixth, nor more than one twenty-fourth of their earnings ; all menial servants, and young unmarried people, to pay one eighteenth of their wages and earnings ; and every occu-

pier of lands and tenements to pay one twentieth of his rent ; the minister, churchwardens, and overseers to be a body corporate for the management of the fund, and to have associated with them a person chosen by the poor, who contribute to the fund ; the payments to be made by weekly contributions, and masters to be responsible for the quota of their servants and labourers ; and each parish to be distinct from any other, and no association of counties, hundreds, or districts. From this fund the poor are to be relieved, with a sum not above four shillings a week, at the discretion of the body corporate, without interference of a magistrate ; but, in particular cases, where the established rate of relief is not sufficient, the minister, during divine service, is to mention the particular case to the congregation, and the churchwardens to collect for that particular case a free benevolence.

Begging to be restrained by a penalty on the *giver* to those who beg ; and settlements to be abolished ; but whoever migrates, must give to the parish officers an account of what parish he removed from, and where he paid his last contribution ; and if the officers of the parish do  
not



not chuse to admit him as a parishioner, they must give to the officers of the parish where he last contributed to the parish fund, a memorandum or note promising to pay them the portion of his earnings; and, in such case, he shall continue a parishioner of the parish from whence he migrated.

All bastard children to be deemed parishioners where their mothers are settled, but the fathers liable, as at present, to maintain them.

Such are the general heads of this plan, the minute organizations of which are not necessary to be noticed in the cursory view which is meant to be taken of these publications; the author also compares the sum of the proportion of contributions proposed to be raised by his plan, with the amount now levied by the poor's rate in his parish, to shew the advantage and facility of the scheme proposed; and adds some well-founded remarks and sensible reasons in support of his proposals.

## L E T T E R XXVI.

SOON after the second reading of Mr. Gilbert's bill was put off, *sine die*, in the House of Commons, William Young, Esq. now Sir William Young, Bart. member of Parliament for St. Mawes, brought in a bill, which he had previously introduced to the notice of the public, by a pamphlet, intituled, "Observations Preliminary to a proposed Amendment of the Poor Laws;" which publication was corrected and enlarged in a second edition, from whence a short summary of the principal heads of the act he proposed shall be taken.

The preamble states, that many poor persons become chargeable for want of employment where they are settled; who, if permitted to inhabit elsewhere, would not be chargeable.

Therefore

Therefore be it enacted, that no person be removed to his place of settlement, until he be actually chargeable.

Provided that such person attends the summons of two magistrates, and makes oath of his last legal settlement; otherwise he shall be removed to his settlement, it being ascertained by other means; and attested copies of such examination shall be given to the parish-officers of the parish into which such pauper is come to reside, and to the pauper himself, which shall be admitted as evidence of his last legal settlement in all courts, &c.

Residence ten years in any parish, without being chargeable, either to the parish in which they reside, or to that where their legal settlement was, shall obtain a settlement in such parish, for a pauper and his children.

No person, from the date of the act, to gain a settlement by paying taxes, by service, nor by apprenticeship; unless with consent of the parish-officers, signified in writing; but this act to have no retrospective view.

Bastards are to be settled with their mother.



Overseers removing a pauper, are to be reimbursed by the parish to which he belongs: reasonable charges of maintenance and removal to be settled by one magistrate.

All contracts for maintaining the poor, allowed by the 9th of George II. to be void, and so much of that act to be repealed; but contracts for the maintenance of poor children above the age of seven, to the age of seventeen, with the consent of the vestry, and the parents of the children, shall be valid.

No publican shall be a parish-officer.

The overseers, &c. shall give a true account to two justices every six months, at stated times, of all ware, implements, tools, &c. for setting the poor to work; and also of all materials and stuff manufactured; and such justices are empowered to order the overseers to purchase other ware, implements, and tools, out of the money collected by the poor's rates; which order they must obey under a penalty not exceeding ten pounds.

The overseers are to register in a book, the names, sex, age, if married or not,—and children, their names, sex, and age, of all poor persons

persons receiving relief; and shall produce this book twice a year, at stated times, to two justices, at their petty sessions, under the same penalty.

Two justices, at such special sessions, are to be empowered to order the overseers to bind out any poor children they think proper; but no person, unless living in the place of his legal settlement, is compelled to take such apprentice.

A vestry shall be empowered to fix a rate of wages, from the 30th of November to the 28th of February, which a majority of them shall agree on, to be paid to such poor people as cannot find work, and to send them round in rotation to the parishioners, proportionally as they pay to the rates; to be employed and paid, in the proportion of two-thirds by the person employing, and one-third by the parish-officers out of the rates; which proportion, if any parishioner refuse to pay, a justice of the peace shall levy treble the amount.

A superintending overseer, with a salary, may be appointed for a parish, hundred, or division, by two justices, at their petty sessions;  
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the salary to be paid by the overseers of the respective parishes out of the money collected by the rates ; the duty of such overseers is described at large in the bill ; and power is also given to the magistrates to remove him for misbehaviour, and he shall also be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds for every offence ; and no person is to obstruct him in his office under a similar penalty.

The penalties levied, by virtue of this bill, to be paid one half to the informant, and one half to the overseers of the parish where the offence shall be committed.

An appeal to the sessions given to persons aggrieved.

Sir William Young's preliminary observations to this bill, contain much instructive matter, and prove, that the mover of the bill well understood the subject he brought forward to the consideration of the House ; the attention his pamphlet, at the time of its publication attracted, was such a test of its merits, as to occasion a wish that the limits of this tract would permit a recital of the greatest part of its contents ; but as the sincerity of unqualified praise is always suspicious, it will  
therefore



therefore better become the writer of these pages to mention an instance or two in which it is presumed Sir William Young has drawn a conclusion that the premises stated by him will not warrant.

He says, in page 23, that an avidity to increase income, has introduced the inclosure of commons and wastes, which has tended to increase the poor's rates; and instances six parishes in Buckinghamshire, which were not inclosed in 1776, when the aggregate of the poor's rates in those parishes was 756l. 16s. 1d. but were inclosed in 1786, when the aggregate amounted to 1485l. 3s.; therefore he concludes, that inclosing wastes increases the poor rates.

By the abstract of the returns made by the overseers, presented by order of the committee, the expences of a great number of parishes have increased in a similar ratio between the two periods of 1776 and 1785, where there has been no inclosure of waste, equally as in these six parishes where inclosures have been made; therefore one fact opposes and destroys the other, consequently no such conclusion can be drawn.

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The consolidation of farms, which this enlightened senator states to have arisen from the necessity that part of the landed interest, who spend their time in our luxurious metropolis, feel to increase their incomes, is alleged as another cause of our increased expences with respect to the poor; but the instance brought to elucidate the assertion is not in point; nor is it the practice, when one farm is increased to five hundred pounds a-year by the consolidation of ten small ones of fifty, to pull down nine farm-houses; but, on the contrary, to put labourers into them; and the stock of the ten farms, which, when in the hands of ten little farmers probably did not amount to two thousand pounds, increases in the hands of a capital farmer, of five hundred a year, to at least double the amount; and where there is the greatest stock there will be, *cæteris paribus*, the greatest employment; but this argument has been so ably handled by other pens as to require no assistance I can give it; thus much, however, is certain, that where a consolidation of small farms proceeds to that excess, as to preclude the labourer's expectation of raising himself  
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in the world,—honest ambition, the best spur to industry, is nipped in the bud.

The public had already received, from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Howlett, vicar of Great Dunmow, Essex, several tracts on the regulation of the internal police of the kingdom; more particularly on the subject which has just been mentioned, as glanced at by Sir William Young, viz. the effects arising from inclosures; which this very accurate investigator, and minute inquirer into facts, states to have been, improved agriculture, plenty and cheapness of provision, population, private and national wealth; in 1788 he turned his attention to the causes of the increase of the poor, and produced a pamphlet, intitled, “The Insufficiency of the Causes to which the Increase of the Poor, and of the Poor’s Rates, have been commonly ascribed:—the true one stated, with an Inquiry into the Mortality of Country Houses of Industry, and a slight View of Mr. Acland’s Plan, for rendering the Poor independent.”

Four principal causes, Mr. Howlett says, have been assigned for the increase of the poor, and of the expences for maintaining them:



them: 1st, Our injudicious system of poor's laws, and their defective execution; 2d, the great number of ale-houses; 3d, the growing wickedness and profligacy of the poor; 4th, the ingrossing of farms.—The first cause has been assigned by Mr. Townsend and Mr. Gilbert, whose arguments and conclusions Mr. Howlett attacks, and then draws an inference; that, “upon the whole, though our poor laws may be imperfect, and their execution defective; we have yet been presented with no satisfactory proof that any of these deficiencies are so great as to have caused that rapid increase of our poor and of our poor rates, which have taken place;” and he is of opinion, before we ascribe these evils to the spirit of our laws, or their execution, we should inquire how the matter stands in other kingdoms of Europe, where no such laws exist;—he gives an instance of a parish in Edinburgh—another in Glasgow; where the expences for the maintenance of the poor have increased very considerably; and concludes this head of his inquiry with extracts from some letters of Mons. Pataud, vicar of the parish of Paterne, in the city of Orleans, which

which state the population of that city at fifty thousand persons, of whom one third receive charitable assistance ; and that there is collected, by various means, and expended for their maintenance about fifteen thousand pounds a year, and many nevertheless perish for want. From information contained in these letters, Mr. Howlett also concludes that five millions sterling are raised for the poor throughout the kingdom of France ; and then asks if England cannot raise two millions better than France can five ?

In the second section, he expresses his doubts of Mr. Godschall's opinion of the fact, that ale-houses are much increased in number throughout the kingdom ; and conceives, on the contrary, that the number is considerably decreased ; at least they are so in the hundred of Hinckford, in the county of Essex ; therefore he concludes, as far as ale-houses are concerned, if the reasoning alluded to be just ; our poor's rates ought to have been gradually diminished.

In the third section, the wickedness and profligacy of the poor are considered : the increment of which the author does not, upon  
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the whole, consider as equal to the increment of their expences, or actual distress; although he acknowledges that there are some considerations which incline him to think that there is really a greater degree of moral depravity, and a greater frequency of vice among our poor than there were formerly; but this increase he, with great humanity, argues to have been the *consequence* of their poverty, not the *cause* of it. In the pursuit of this investigation, he takes notice of, and treats with no great respect, the opinions of Mr. Firmin, Mr. Locke, Lord Chief Justice Hale, Sir Josiah Child, Mr. Defoe, Mr. Godschall, and others; who respectively, at different times from 1678 to the present period, have declared themselves of opinion that the relaxation of discipline and corruption of manners have occasioned a general aversion to honest employment.

The question, whether the absorption of smaller farms in larger, has tended to increase the number of poor, and their expences? occupies the fourth section. Mr. Howlett enters fully into the subject; and proves, by fair deduction of argument, that, allowing the  
number



number of labouring families to be increased, by the small farmers being reduced to labourers, to the amount of even forty or fifty thousand; yet as the call for labour in husbandry has, by the same means, been increased, and the number of poor added to the total being not a hundredth part, it will at the most allow for an increment of expence, amounting to ten thousand pounds a year. To prove this, these facts are stated: 1st, that the number of labourers, forty years ago, was five millions; 2d, that the poor cost the kingdom, at that time, a million sterling; and that the practice of engrossing farms may have converted farmers families into labourers to the amount of forty or fifty thousand. Mr. Howlett gives every commendation to the ingenious manner in which the Editor of the Annals of Agriculture has treated this subject, in vol. 7th, page 516.—Having, in the first part, offered his objection to the causes assigned by many eminent men, who have given their opinion on this subject, as being inadequate to the effect attributed to them; he proceeds, in the second section, to state what appears to him *alone* sufficient to have raised the expences

of the poor much higher than they have risen, to place them in a situation equally comfortable with what they possessed forty or fifty years ago, "*This is none other than, that the price of labour has not advanced in proportion to the advance in the price of provisions.*"

To detail the train of arguments followed by our well-informed and ingenious investigator, would extend this part of the present inquiry to too great a length ; and to mutilate arguments, where one doubts of their solidity, would not be candid ; let it suffice, therefore, to drop the subject at present, stating only the result of the author's opinion, in his own words : " Upon the whole, there is a long and uniform chain of evidence to establish *our main point*, that the increasing miseries, and expences of the poor, have been owing to the greater advance in the price of provisions, either gradual, or sudden and temporary, than in the price of labour."

In the next section, Mr. Howlett conceives it necessary to obviate a very natural conclusion from the doctrine he has attempted to establish, *viz.* that if the price of labour has not increased in an equal proportion with the price  
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of provisions, it is an evidence of the declining prosperity of the kingdom, and a certain indication of ruin ; this he by no means admits to be the case ; and accounts for the exception to the rule, by collateral circumstances, as the increase of people, and the simplification of labour by the use of machines ; and concludes, with this observation ; either raise the wages of the poor, or give them provisions as they had them forty years ago.

The remaining part of this publication, which relates principally to an examination of the plans that have been offered, particularly Mr. Gilbert's, and the invalidation of those reasons which that gentleman has advanced for conceiving a good opinion of houses of industry, as to the object of a diminution of the expence, by pointing out the precariousness of such a diminution continuing, and by meeting the good effect which they have occasioned in lessening expence, with instances of increased mortality, especially among children, cannot be now dwelt on ; as it is the purport of this tract to weigh the general sentiments of the kingdom, on the leading points of the police respecting the poor, in a balance



compounded of the sense of the legislature, as collected at different periods, and the opinions of individuals, who have given us their sentiments in print on this important topic ; rather than to cavil at any of those opinions that militate with the writer's ideas, which, until the subject is fully investigated, have not the sanction of solid judgment, nor the light of clear information.

That many more tracts, than those which have passed, as it were, in review on this subject, may have been written, and that more rays of light, might have been collected, on a topic which is so much the concern of every man, and appears to be the immediate care of no man, cannot be denied ; many pamphlets have survived by name only, but not a single copy of them can be found ; possibly had they contained any matter worthy of notice, they would, by some means or other, have been preserved to us, either in the volumes of the reviewers, or by subsequent editions ; but it appears absurd to regret the want of that information, which the age, cotemporary with the writer, did not think worth handing to posterity ; and the only apology to be made,

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is for that inattention, if such be the fault, which has neglected to take notice of what would afford solid information; which it is hoped will not be found to be very considerable, more especially when the plan of these letters is considered; which is calculated to bring to the mind what the legislature has done, and sensible men have written on the subject, from the time that the police of the poor first claimed the attention of the community.

Some stress has been laid on the increasing population of the kingdom, as a cause of the increasing expence in maintaining those who class under the title of labouring poor: the progression of that increase in our number shall now be shortly stated, as it will be at least satisfactory to know the degree; we may afterwards reason on the effect.

Lord Chief Justice Hale, and Mr. Gregory King agree in asserting, that the population of England, on the arrival of the Normans in the year 1077, might be about 2,000,000.

From a computation, which appears accurate, or as nearly so as the nature of the case requires, or can be expected to be, the popu-

lation of England and Wales was, in the year 1327, about 2,092,978.

In 1583, the number of people amounted to about 4,688,000.

In 1662, Mr. Graunt calculated the population at 6,440,000.

In 1690, Mr. Gregory King calculated them at 5,500,000; but he estimated four and a half to a house, whereas it is supposed that the number of inhabitants were, to the number of houses, as about five two-fifths to one, which would increase the number to about seven millions.—Mr. Chalmer's estimate.

Mr. Howlett calculated them, a few years ago, at 8,691,597:—the Editor of the *Annals of Agriculture*, 8,500,000:—Dr. Price, about the same time, at only five millions; but the concurrent opinions of political arithmeticians agree, that the higher numbers are nearest the truth; and that Mr. Howlett's proportion of five and two-fifths to a house, is as exact a *ratio* of inhabitants to dwellings, as can easily be pointed out; in the parish of Clare, it was in 1786 very near the truth; the dwellings being 201—the inhabitants 1077.

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The following deviation from the proposed line of this inquiry shall close this paper.

Mr. Howlett having appeared, in the last number of the Annals, to doubt the validity of an observation, which has fallen from me, with respect to the call for labour, being of a more constant nature, and less desultory in agriculture, than in manufactures; the observation shall be repeated in the expression made use of on the occasion; and, to prevent the effect which might arise in the minds of those who pay any attention to the subject, from the respect due to the opinion of the gentleman who doubts the propriety of the idea alluded to, the assertion shall be re-examined by the test proposed by himself; the passage alluded to is as follows:

“ Some have imagined, that the great increase of our expences relating to the poor, has arisen from temporary want of work; it may be recollected, that this cannot happen where the employment is agriculture, because this occupation always requires nearly the same number of hands all years, and is independent of any desultory call for work, which may, as all manufactures do, the demand of

which is uncertain, give full employment to the poor some years, and leave them to subsist on the poor's rates, when the demand for the manufacture ceases."

Mr. Howlett says, and it must be allowed as a fact, that, near the commencement of a lease, a greater quantity of work is done in a farm, than towards the conclusion; but this corroborates the assertion alluded to, which respects the kingdom at large; for innumerable leases are constantly commencing and expiring; the whole quantity of work done in agriculture, one year with another, must therefore be nearly the same; and though individual parishes may find some difference, the aggregate of work throughout the kingdom must be at all times equal; and this is not only *possible*, or *probable*, but *inevitable*; the universality of the cause, both in respect to time and place, producing an effect directly opposite to that which would arise from a cause affecting time and place partially only. If, throughout England, all leases were to commence at the same time, and expire at the same time, the effect Mr. Howlett contends for would happen, and the difference in  
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the demand for labour might at times be great; but the fact is different, so is the effect.

Mr. Howlett says, seasons occasion a difference in the demand for labour;—so they do. But the *quantum* of earnings remains the same at the end of a year: for instance, in a wet summer, during the actual falling of the rain, the application of industry to the works of the field is suspended; but the call for labour is proportionably greater when the earth is fitted to receive again the labour of the husbandman; and probably the demand increases, in a greater *ratio* than the time lost: we know how difficult it is to keep land clean in a wet season; we know that a greater burthen of straw is grown, which occasions a greater demand of labour to harvest, and also to thresh; a greater demand for work, brings a greater price; hence the advance of price in the harvest and the barn, repays the loss of time, and the quantity of labour done throughout the year remains the same.

The idea of “the earth being fast bound in chains of frost for three or four months in the year, which defy the mattock, the spade, and



and the plough," cannot be allowed, in all its latitude of assertion, to take place in England; few farmers discharge their labourers for a frost; and in that time of the year, when we have reason to expect such chains of frost, the plough suffers no imprisonment, for it would not otherwise be at work; the mattock and the team can still find work; a *snow only* can prevent *them* being employed, and that but for a few days; the spring of industry will, when affected by such a mere temporary cessation, immediately afterwards re-act with greater force, being excited by a brisker demand.

Difference of produce, except in the case of hops, which are too confined and local a culture to reason from generally, can very little affect the quantity of labour throughout the year; a wet season generally produces worse crops throughout the kingdom at large, than a dry one, although not in quite so great a disproportion, as Mr. Howlett asserts; but a wet season produces a greater demand for labour to keep the land clean, and also in hay-time, in harvest, in threshing, although the produce of corn is less; therefore, speaking generally

generally throughout the kingdom; the less productive the crop, the more the labour.

In short, Sir, had not the cavil fallen from so able a critic, and so respectable a man, I should not have thought my observation required a defence; it is to vindicate the general rectitude of the sentiments which have escaped from me on this subject, in his and your readers minds, that I have revised what I had advanced; and remain of opinion, that reason is on the side of my observation, and believe that experience will not contradict it.

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## L E T T E R   XXVII.

FROM the information contained in the preceding pages of these letters, and from the evidence which they have opened to our knowledge, of what has been done by our legislators, and written by the enlightened part of our countrymen on this subject; although that information cannot claim the  
merit

merit of minute detail, nor the evidence that specification of particulars which would have disgusted the many, although it might have been approved of by a few; it is conceived several useful principles may be deduced, that may serve as a ground for maxims, which, if called into action, by the energetic power of the legislature, may probably produce an improvement in the moral habits of the poor, lead them on to the enjoyment of a greater share of the comforts of life, and diminish, at the same time, the expences of their maintenance.

That those who are in such a state, with respect to the riches of this world, as to have no other property than that which their labour can produce them; claim as a right, in all civilized nations, however the laws which respect property may be modified, protection from personal injury, is a position which cannot be doubted; no social compact can otherwise be supposed to exist between man and man.

This claim leads on to another, flowing from it as a natural and inevitable consequence; a claim to maintenance; when by  
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the loss of health, accidental debility, or age, their power to maintain themselves ceases; because in this case, they would otherwise sustain a personal injury, from the modification of property by the laws of society; and in a similar proportion is their claim, as through any of these causes that power is diminished.

These are principles implanted on our minds; they are anterior to, and vastly above all human laws; they form an impulsive duty, as strong in its operations, and as lovely in its effects, as the *στοργή* in the animal creation; it is upon this basis, as upon an immoveable rock, that Christ builds his strongest moral exhortations, and calls this duty *charity*; tells us it will cover a multitude of defects; that it binds us by a stronger obligation than any other moral or religious duty.

In all climes, through all ages, wherever civilization has spread a single ray of light, has this principle been inculcated; and that not as an optional service, to be done or neglected, at the will of the free agent; but as a bounden duty; one, the omission of which, is an affirmative offence; and thus preached the Apostles

tles, thus the fathers of the church, and thus their successors.

The fruit of their doctrines has been great, it has been worthy of the cause; it was the cause of human nature, of religion confined to no sect, sworn to no master; it was alike the cause of the Christian, the Jew, the followers of Mahomet, and Confucius; it was the cause of universal humanity.

But we will confine our view to the effect of the doctrine of charity in this island; and here reference must be had to our public archives, as well those which are still in the possession of the chapters in the different dioceses throughout the kingdom, those which are in the custody of the public in their several repositories, as those also in the possession of private individuals; recourse must also be had to printed books, to writers in past ages, whose labours have collected the gleanings of antiquity, and, by the means of the press, have preserved them for the perusal of ages then unborn; a kind of testimony, to which our laws, and the practice of our courts of law, gives sanction; it being not unfrequently the best evidence, the nature of the thing is capable of.

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Do not all these, taken separately and together, inform us, that all the tithes in the kingdom, every acre of church land, every thing moving from the produce of the land, assisted and cultivated by the labour of man, which is claimed by the church as tithe, whether prædial, mixed, or personal, takes its origin from this source; were they not all separately, and in the aggregate, the fruit of these doctrines? obtained from our rude and unlettered forefathers as acts of religious duty and moral obligation? If they were not, whence flowed they? From what law of society? From what human precept? A divine right cannot be claimed for them in any Christian country; our constitutional lawyers have uniformly asserted, that a divine right to tithes, certainly ceased with the Jewish theocracy, and they have not proved that it in fact ever existed.

That such was their origin, is not only the true theory; but that, in former days, the practice flowed in conformity with the principle, has been already proved in the instance of an application from St. Augustine to Pope Gregory,



gory, with respect to the distribution of tithes; from ancient canons of the church, and from other instances, where the threefold or fourfold division of the tithes were directed, as the sees of the bishops were or were not endowed. The writings of the fathers also corroborate the proof of this theory, as well as of the practice; and the evidence of those who first held these fiduciary estates for the benefit of the poor, and of the church; is evidence of the highest authority, and establishes the most convincing proof.

The statute law also proceeded on this idea, or else the legislature looked on the possessions of the ecclesiastics as the property of the kingdom, in the reigns of Richard the Second and Henry the Fourth.

These, therefore, must be taken as facts; that the law of God and of Christ have established the duty of charity in the breast of man; and that the labourers in the Christian vineyard, have in this country cultivated this principle to a productive purpose; and that in elder times, a distribution was made to the poor, of part of that estate thus obtained and invested in the ecclesiastics, by the donations  
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of those who had landed possessions, in discharge of their religious and moral duties ;— but those days have long since passed away ;— and in proportion as the refreshing streams were diverted from their proper current, by the cunning and selfishness of those whose duty it was to have administered them ; the principle of charity, ever fruitful in means to accomplish its godlike purposes, has struck, like Moses, from the rock, other fruitful streams to refresh those who stand in need of refreshment ; and on the basis of fluctuating compassion, has founded a firm municipal right.

In remoter times, when the feudal tenures subsisted in this kingdom, which made no other consideration of man, than as an agent of defence, or destruction ; when the maxim, *detur fortiori* was paramount, every claim which the rights of nature, or the constitution of the country held sacred ; the voice of the laws, or the claims of equity could be heard but seldom, amidst the din of arms ; which the contentions among the descendants of William, the Norman, for the sovereignty of that kingdom, that he had wrested from its old possessors, occasioned ; no wonder if, in such

times, the more silent claims of the poor, for that dole which they had been accustomed to receive the distribution of, from the incumbent clergy, in obedience to the ordinance of councils and papal decrees, were of no avail; and no wonder also that after several centuries passed in warfare and bloody contention, between the houses of York and Lancaster; when the union of the two families was perfected, by the marriage of Henry the Seventh with Elizabeth of York; that the right itself, under which the ecclesiastical estates of the kingdom were held in trust, for the maintenance of the poor, laity as well as clergy, should be forgotten; and that when the immediate descendant of that alliance broke all bounds with the court of Rome, spurned the source from whence he had personally received the title of *fidei defensor*, and divided the spoils of the monasteries among his unprincipled courtiers; no wonder that these claims should have remained dormant; but it by no means follows as a consequence, that because such rights of charity as these, owing to the rough and unfettled circumstances of the times were dormant, they should become extinct; especially when  
so



so large a portion of revenue still remained to the church ; the possessors of which, however charitable in their doctrines, by degrees withdrew the rightful and accustomed proportion of their estates from the repair of churches and the maintenance of the poor ; and although they still presided in our high court of conscience, and through the ensuing century gave us chancellors, were notwithstanding very careful how they permitted such a claim to be established over the estates of the dissolved monasteries ; knowing that their own possessions were held by the same tenure, granted for the same purposes, and liable to similar trusts.

Hence, therefore, may be dated the origin of the compulsory maintenance ; hence, as from a channel whose sources have in past ages been diverted from their natural and proper current, may be deduced that sterile appearance, which would have closed in scenes of blood or famine, and all its horrid accompaniments ; if the legislature, in the age of Elizabeth, awakened from a long apathy to the sufferings of poverty ; by those scenes of woe which the Queen's progresses through her kingdom offered to her view ; and which occasioned that

feeling exclamation, *Pauper ubique jacet* ; had not opened, by the compulsion of legal authority, new sources to feed the wretched.

But the distribution of charity was not the total of the loss sustained by the poor ; they were, during the earlier ages of this kingdom, used to receive advice, and the direction of their moral conduct, from the exhortations of the clergy ; and that not from their pulpits only ; but they were the private friends, the patrons, the counsellors, the confessors of the poor ; they held an amazing sway over their minds ; a sway, I fear, ill exchanged, both here, and in a neighbouring country, for that unhallowed indifference for every thing sacred which now prevails ; but here, as there, while the clergy guarded the moral conduct, watched over the industry, the health, the œconomy of the parish poor, they protected their own estates from incumbrance ; and in proportion as their parishioners possessed the moral and œconomic virtues, in that proportion were the ecclesiastic estates productive to the respective incumbents ; because the wants of the poor were less ; and a probability of increasing the voluntary contributions of the more opulent parishioners

rishioners was greater, as the respect the parish held the clergy in increased.

It was with a view to this influence, and to preserve the decaying authority and practice of the clergy in this respect, that those admonitions to charity from the pulpit, were enjoined by the ecclesiastic courts, which Dr. Burn mentions; and which prove, that those courts, however *now* they may have fallen into dispute, felt *then* strongly, the obligation upon their suitors, to provide, either from their pockets, or from their preachings, a fund for the poor.

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L E T T E R   XXVIII.

**E**NOUGH has been advanced to prove how these things have been; we all know how they are; we all know that a claim to the third or the fourth part of the ecclesiastic revenue, for the benefit of the poor, is nearly vanished in the oblivion of past times; but a



right may remain, although the use of it has been long neglected. A maxim of law prevails in favour of ecclesiastic rights, *nullum tempus occurrit ecclesiæ*; the poor are part of the church; the possessions of the church are the possessions of the poor; their revenues have been so stiled by the fathers of the church; they were obtained in the name of the poor, for the love of God; are not the poor, therefore, permitted to claim the benefit of the same maxim? Is not that the law of a part, which is the law of the whole? At least there is as much justice in the maxim, for the one, as for the other; therefore, *nullum tempus occurrit pauperibus*. If positive ordinances of the state have not destroyed this right, no length of time should be allowed to weaken it.

It is not the purpose of this tract to prove such a negative; let those who doubt the truth of these assertions, find, if they can, an affirmative injunction, that the church should hold its revenue, free and clear of those trusts, for the benefit of the poor which were created by the donors, when they gave their lands and tithes for eleemosynary purposes; no such discharge

charge is to be seen in the acts of parliament, passed in the 27th and 31st of Henry the Eighth, which empowered the crown to alienate the possessions of the monasteries: those, therefore, possessed of estates, which were formerly monastic, hold them *quoad hoc*, subject to the same equitable claim.

But let us not dwell too long on this topic; it will now be sufficient to hint, that in any future revival of the laws respecting the poor, their maintenance, employment, and relief; it may be worth the attention of the legislature, to call to mind for what purposes the ecclesiastic revenue of the kingdom was originally granted; to inquire whether it is employed in those purposes; to investigate the fact, on what trusts, and on account of what duties, the clergy originally received the clerical estates; and to ask whether those duties and those trusts are now fulfilled? And when they are convinced of the purposes for which those estates were originally granted, can find no positive law to abrogate them, and perceive that the poor stand as much in need of the performance of those duties, as they did when the estates were first granted to the

church; the principle on which the legislature should proceed is manifest. I am aware of the nature of such investigations, and fully sensible, that no man can expect, from those, whose performance of the duties, for which they have received their estates, is challenged, and brought to the test, a favourable audience, or a candid interpretation of the motives, which instigate to the inquiry; but be that as it may; the present situation of the poor; their wretched state; their increasing misery; the increasing burthen upon the public for their maintenance; warrant the inquiry: the inquiry brings to light the evidence; the deductions are the consequence of a free and candid use of the reasoning faculties; if any error lies, either in fact or argument, candour requires an explanation, from those who conceive, there is the least intention in the writer to mislead the judgment of the public; which explanation will be thankfully received; as it will nevertheless tend to establish one great object of this investigation, which is truth.

Assuming therefore, at present, the foregoing state of the matter as fact; would it be a hard compromise with the possessors of ecclesiastical



clesiastical estates? that those in the possession of lay patrons, on whom no parochial duty is incumbent, should, after a medium of the poor rates has been taken throughout the kingdom for the last three years, bear the increased expence of the maintenance of the poor alone, until the rate upon their ecclesiastical property amounts to one-fourth of the net annual receipt of their profits, before the lay estates be further incumbered; and that the clergy should be rated in the same proportion; but that those who are resident, be they rectors or vicars, should have an active and directing controul, over the management of the poor in their respective parishes; that they may again, as they did formerly, by their precepts, their exhortations, and their examples, introduce such moral, œconomic, and industrious habits among the poor, as may tend to make them more comfortable as men, and more respectable as citizens; at the same time, such a controul would place the clergy in a much more respectable situation, than they at present possess; and it would be a respect flowing from a proper cause; as it would engraft authority upon precept, united with example;

example; and enable them to enforce in practice, those moral duties, which many of them so eloquently inculcate from the pulpit.

Advertisements of associations, for the commutation of tithes, appear frequently in our public prints; whether a general commutation is practicable, or, if practicable, would be relished by the clergy throughout the kingdom, it is difficult to determine; but if a commutation should take place, it certainly is worthy the consideration of the landed interest, whether they should chuse to convey any portion of their estates in mortmain as a composition for tithes, free and discharged of *those services*, for which the *tithes themselves* were, by the possessors of those estates *originally* granted; which services were not only a portion of the profits for the poor, another for the erection and repair of churches; but also *that advice, that counsel*, that authoritative injunction, coupled with *example*, which would effect more, by means of good morals, to increase the comforts of the poor, diminish their expences and the rate collected for their relief; than the whole of the ecclesiastic revenue,  
applied

applied to the same purpose, under the present execution of the laws. These sentiments, on the necessity of a national provision for the poor, flow from my pen, in direct opposition to the opinion, so warmly expressed on this topic by you, my friend, in your excellent publication on French agriculture, internal œconomy, and politics; and in opposition also to your idea so frequently started in conversation, that the poor originally had no right to pecuniary assistance from the state; that they should be left to private charity. The reflection, *Mais cette exemple est un grand et important leçon pour nous, car independamment des vices qu'elle nous presente, et d'un dépense monstrueuse, et d'un encouragement necessaire a la fainéantise; elle nous decouvre la plaie politique de l'Angleterre la plus dévorante, qu'il est également dangereux pour sa tranquillité et son bonheur, de detruire, ou de laisser subsister*, that the Committee of Mendicity, in the Constitutional Assembly of France, threw out with respect to the mischiefs of the English system, arose, from their mistaking the effect of the faulty execution of that system, for the code of laws itself; which remains in a great measure a  
dead



dead letter. And it is no improbable presumption, that feeling as they did, the sacred duty, to provide relief for the poor; they adopted the principle of the English system with their eyes open to the evils of it, because they knew of none better; although most certainly the same sacred duty which requires the expenditure of thirty millions of livres a year, would extend the expence to fifty millions, to one hundred, or to any indefinite sum, if necessity required it: and it was with *them* a sacred duty; for, having possessed themselves of the clerical estates, they could not, in justice to the body of their countrymen, take them to the use of the state, otherwise than as the clergy held them, subject, in some degree, to the maintenance of the poor.

In the mean time, it is the duty, as well as the interest, of those from whom this revenue is collected, there as well as here, to watch over the execution of the laws, and the expenditure of the revenue raised for the poor; which conduct will prevent such a necessity: but if, by negligence, extravagance, or speculation, the urgency of the case should require a larger sum to be raised; it will arise *there*, as  
it

it does *here*, from the pockets of those; by whose negligence, or misconduct, such urgency was occasioned.

As to leaving the poor to private contributions, it would, in our present state of civilization, refinement, and general apathy to religious matters, be a cruel and unjust dereliction: were they to be supported by those alone who are the best members of the society; the compassionate, the religious, and those who live in retirement, would then witness such scenes of distress, as would wring every penny from their pockets, or they must become immovable to every feeling of compassion; while the gay, the joyous, the unfeeling; those who live in crowds, and in the bustle of the world; would contribute not a farthing to those scenes of distress, from which they are so far removed.

In answer to the supposition, that dire necessity will compel exertions of industry, it is much to be doubted, whether extremity of distress generally rouses the human mind, or the faculties of the body, to great active exertions; from amidst those scenes which have required vast exertions to preserve human life,  
very

very few have been saved, in proportion to those who have perished ; disastrous voyages, shipwrecks, retreats of armies before a conquering enemy, all prove how few have magnanimity of soul to bear up against extremity of distress : and of all those circumstances which drive the human mind to apathy or despair ; poverty and its lowering concomitants, cold, hunger, and thirst, are the most formidable ; because in proportion as these debilitate both the body and the mind, does the urgency of the case require the greater activity of exertion : it may, therefore, with great reason, be asserted, that an increase of distress will not occasion an increase of industry.

If the case of the poor in Scotland and Ireland be produced as a proof, that leaving them to private charity, would have a better effect than the rates of England ; the answer is obvious ; that in Scotland they are not left to private charity in their principal cities ; but are admitted to a provision out of the funds of the general session of those cities ; and that they emigrate from the Highlands, and the country where agriculture and manufactures do not find them sufficient employment, to  
those



those countries where there is employment; and the emigration of the useful subjects of a country, has never yet been produced as a proof, of the excellence of its internal œconomy.

Ireland presents, in your accurate and particular account of its internal police, no very flattering prospect of the situation of the poor, either with respect to their modes of life, their moral habits, or their industry; in the first instance, they are in general what the English peasantry were five hundred years ago; the cottage which affords neither window or chimney; where cows, calves, pigs, children, men, and women, all lie on straw together on the same floor; their raggedness, which approaches to nakedness, and the general disuse of shoes and stockings, give one no refined ideas either of their cleanliness, or their comforts; and a country where pilfering is carried to that excess, that turnips are stolen by the poor in cart loads, and acres of wheat carried away in a night, is not a country of well-regulated police, or good moral principles; neither will the dance in the evening, or the last polish which they receive  
from

from the dancing-master, who is essential to their system of education, compound for that excess of laziness, and that weakness in their exertions, when *encouraged* to work, which has occasioned you to doubt of the heartiness of their food, potatoes, oatmeal, and milk; although the athletic forms of the men, and the swarms of children in their miserable cottages, bespeak vigour and health: I must conclude, therefore, that were the Irish to take the forty-third of Elizabeth, together with the consequence flowing from a strict execution of it; the poor, as well as the rich, would find their scale of comfort and prosperity rising from the change; and were we, in this kingdom, to call the parochial clergy to our assistance, in preserving an execution of the laws respecting the poor, more consistent with the original intention and obvious meaning of those laws; which are calculated to encourage a spirit of industry, not of idleness; of œconomy, not of profusion; a spirit of honesty, not of theft; of religion, not of atheism; of subordination, not of riot: and if the legislature of this country should ordain such to be their line of duty, which certainly is their  
line

line of conscientious and honourable interest; the scale of prosperity and comfort among *our* poor would also rise; and that of the expence attending their maintenance and relief would gradually subside; the clergy would then have an honest and honourable claim to that portion of the tithes alluded to; their title to the usufructuary enjoyment of which, unimpeached by the claims of those, who we may suppose would have been considered by our remote forefathers, the original donors of the estates, as fit objects of charity, appears to be a very doubtful point of equity.

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## L E T T E R XXIX.

**T**HE laws and ordinances of all countries, towards the first periods of their civilization, partake of the rough and ferocious nature of the times, and of the inhabitants; who being lately emerged from a wild and savage state; although they may be awake to some of the advantages arising from subordi-

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nation, are not sufficiently refined to be bound by filken chains; but as society advances, and the social blessings of civilization by degrees unfold themselves, those laws which regulate the multitude take a milder tone; and obedience to them is secured by inclination, as well as duty; until luxury and dissipation, sure prognostics of a falling state, occasion the legislator again to stain the pages of the penal code with blood.

Such has been the progressive temper of the statute laws of this country:—we find in past ages the lower classes of people restrained by a variety of ordinances, which breathe but little of the spirit of humanity; while they strongly prove, that *here* no portion of those absurd ideas, which have involved France in a scene of horrid anarchy, at any time prevailed; the earliest regulations of written law, which affect the mass of the people, compelled “those who rank in the class of labourers and artificers, who were able in body, and within the age of threescore years, not living in merchandise, exercising any craft, or having of their own whereon to live, to work at regulated prices, on pain  
“ of

“ of imprisonment, and of being burnt with  
“ a hot iron.”

Vagabonds, or valiant beggars, as the old acts of parliament call them, were treated with greater rigour; they were to be instantly committed to gaol, to be fed with bread and water, to be set in the stocks, beaten with whips through the towns where they were taken, and then sent to the place where they last lived;—and this for the first offence.

For the second offence, to be scourged two days, to be set in the pillory, and one ear to be cut off.

In short, the category of punishments inflicted by authority of law on this description of persons, is too irksome to be dwelt on; but it is such as plainly proves, that our ancestors had no idea of the Gallic principle of equality, of weighing number in the balance against property; for we perceive, the multitude is to be restrained by these laws respecting labour, and to be punished for a breach of them; property is exempted.

With respect to those poor who, from age, sickness, or accident, had become impotent,

and were compelled, by necessity, to ask alms; they were to subsist on such as they could obtain by begging within certain limits, which seem to have been the hundreds, or towns where they were born, and in succeeding times where they had lived the last three years; and if these real objects of compassion wandered beyond those limits, or such as the justices of the peace within the district should allot to them, they were to be punished by imprisonment and the stocks, and their children under the age of five years might be taken from them, by any person, to be brought up to any honest labour.

Such were the restraints and disabilities under which the lower classes of our fellow-creatures lived in the days of our forefathers; and such were the punishments to which they were subject for a breach of those laws; which laws lean to oppression, not to humanity, to servitude rather than to freedom.

The lenient spirit of more polished times, tacitly relieved them, by degrees, from a great portion of these restraints, by ceasing to inflict the punishment annexed to a breach of the law;



law ; and by so doing, the spirit of the times outstripped the attention of the legislature, to the happiness and ease of the people.

No law ought to remain unrepealed, which is not intended generally to be enforced ; a partiality in this respect, has not in view the welfare of the governed, and may descend to that *misera servitus ubi lex est aut vaga aut inconcinna*. The volumes of the Statutes at Large are, on that account, in some measure a grievance ; because, in a code of positive institutions, many of them highly penal, which has swelled within this century to so enormous a bulk \* ; those acts of parliament that, from their long disuse, as well as from the remote antiquity of their original formation, not being adapted to the spirit of the present times, may be called obsolete ; and those also, which are not commonly put in practice, but may, at

\* Pickering's edition of the Statutes at Large is comprised in thirty-eight volumes octavo ; the last six volumes of which are remarkably thick, and in bulk near twice the quantity of paper in the first six volumes ; and only the first nine volumes and about half the tenth include the Acts of Parliament to the end of the last century ; the remaining twenty-eight volumes are filled with the Acts of the present century, and fifteen of them with the Acts of the present reign.

the same time, be used as concealed arms by the malicious, to annoy their unwary and incautious fellow-subjects; as well as those which still remain the written law of the land, although not the practical municipal rule of the day; should not remain in our law books; increasing the number of pages, which are, without them, too numerous.

Such are the reflections which have occurred to me, on the evidence before us, with respect to the state of the poor, as far as it relates to confining them to certain parishes, which we, in these days, call their places of settlement. But it is time to recollect, that as the judgment should not suffer itself to be led captive by the imagination, so, neither should the discursive researches of the antiquary lead the pen away from the more immediate purpose of this letter; which is intended to point out the present situation of the poor, both with respect to the law of settlements and certificates; as far as their situation may be affected, not only by the law of the land, but also by the practice of the magistrates; together, with such alterations as may tend to increase the general stock of industry: permit me, therefore,

therefore, after a quick retreat from this short digression upon the temper of former times, to re-enter on my subject, which regards those days in which we live ; and also those which are to come, and may pass away before the view of our posterity.

Although the antiquity of restraints on the liberty of the poor to go from place to place, as they imagine they may best be able to find provision and employment, is of a date prior to the days of Elizabeth ; yet the idea of a parish settlement certainly arose from the parish rate, enacted in the forty-third year of her reign ; nor does it seem a remarkable circumstance, that some distinct rules should be drawn by the legislature, how each parish might know its own poor, and be able to confine the expenditure of the rate to its parishioners only.

But this was not all ; each parish being obliged to maintain its own poor, it was prudent to do it by their own officers, and under their own inspection ; hence arose a restriction, that, however just it might be with respect to the interests of parishes one with another ; is injustice with respect to the poor



themselves, and a considerable obstacle to the encouragement of general labour and industry throughout the kingdom.

Confinement of the poor within their respective parishes, which is the principal object in the statutes, 13th and 14th Charles II. cap. 12. is the restriction alluded to; because every person, whatever may be his ingenuity, industry, or abilities, falls under the scope of this law, if the parish officers chuse to complain to a magistrate that he is likely to become chargeable; unless such person occupies a tenement of ten pounds yearly value, or lives on property in house or land of his own.

Adam Smith attributes the very unequal price of labour in England, in places of no great distance from each other, to this cause; and he also says, that to remove a man from the parish, where he chuses to reside, is an abridgment of natural liberty.

Mr. Hay, in his plan, published in 1735, would have all notion of parochial settlement abolished, as being the root from which every evil relating to the poor sprung; every parish being in a state of expensive war with the rest of the nation, regarding the poor of all other  
places

places as aliens, and caring not what becomes of them; Mr. Acland, Mr. Townshend, Sir William Young, have also professed an unfavourable opinion of the law of settlements; and the last gentleman has offered to the House of Commons the heads of a bill, that would, in a great measure, have removed the objectionable restraints on so large a portion of our fellow-subjects, and would have simplified the law on this point; the expences arising from which, cost the occupiers of houses and land, throughout England and Wales, above fifty-five thousand pounds annually, in the years 1783, 1784, 1785; and it is much to be feared that these expences are an increasing, not a decreasing evil.

Neither the law, nor the equity of this case, seems to have been clearly understood by parliament, when the restrictive acts passed; they proceeded on this principle, that the object of expence between parishes was the only point of consequence to be considered; whereas, in fact, it ought not to have come into question at all: the 43d of Elizabeth, section the third, providing for any case where the inhabitants of a parish might *not be able to*  
maintain

maintain the poor, by calling in aid other parishes within the hundred; and the parish in which I am now writing is an instance in point, that this section has been frequently carried into execution; other parishes, within the hundred, having been called in aid to relieve the poor of Clare; the expression, *not able*, must be allowed to be of great latitude; the meaning annexed to the expression by the legislature, cannot be easily defined; according to the common acceptation of the word, no such a case can well exist, every parish in the kingdom may be *able* to maintain its own poor; and if *ability* is to be explained by *choice*, few will be found *willing*; the word must therefore have some relation to moral convenience, and then it would depend on the quantum, or reasonable proportion of his means of living, which moral obligations would induce a man to part with towards the maintenance of his poor neighbour; it must then be measured by the principle of charity; possible, was this undefined expression to be precisely explained by some rule of proportion to occupations in a parish, the contests between parishes would be at an end, and they would



would arise only between hundreds ; even this would greatly diminish the source of litigations ; more especially if incorporations of hundreds, for the maintenance of the poor, should become general.

Therefore, as the law formerly stood, although not as it is now executed, the contest, if any, ought to lie between hundreds, and not between parishes ; this alone would be a great relief, not only to the poor, with respect to general convenience by increasing the market for work, but by the consequential diminution of the expences of maintaining them ; supposing it to be true, that the more a poor family *earns*, the less parochial assistance it requires ; if the contest lay between counties it would be better.

But there ought to be no litigations at all about the settlements of the poor ; “ *le jeu ne vaut pas le chandelle* ;” there should be no attornies bills in overseers accounts ; it is cheaper to relieve, than to remove a family, by a suit at the sessions ; which, if the overseers are peculiarly astute in watching over the interests of their parishes, or in other words are tenacious of their opinions, will go into the King’s Bench,

Bench, and the successful parish may find an honest family removed, to their utter ruin, at double the expence that would have maintained them and their posterity for ever.

If a man of property has half a score contiguous farms in his occupation, it would be extreme folly to station a certain portion of his farming stock at each individual farm, and not allow that stock to migrate to his other farms, as food, utility, or the general convenience and attention to profit, might give occasion; to fix irrevocably, threescore sheep in this farm, sixscore in that, so many bullocks in one, so many in another, would be a remarkable instance of bad management; a good manager certainly would rather form a calculation of what stock the whole number of acres in his occupation might support, with the greatest probability of the greatest profit; and with that view, would remove them from one part of his estate to the other, without having any respect to the division of his farms:—so stands the interest of the nation with respect to the poor; it is one large domain, and the stock, or people, ought to be formed *quoad hoc* in the same manner; and similar means would

would produce corresponding effects; the proprietor of land would turn *his acres* to the greatest possible profit; *the nation* would produce the greatest possible quantity of industry; and the poor would be maintained at the least possible expence.

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L E T T E R   X X X.

A TOTAL repeal of the law of settlements, might, in the present state of things, promote vagrancy, which is a disorder both in morals and industry, tending to the worst consequences that can arise from population; the abolition of settlements therefore cannot be recommended; a modification of them, on principles more consistent with the general advantage of society, is the whole that should be attempted.

The preamble to the act of parliament confining the poor to their respective parishes, states, that the people endeavour to settle themselves, where there is the best stock, the largest commons or wastes to build cottages, and



and the most woods for them to burn and destroy ; and when they have consumed them, that they go to another parish, and at last become rogues and vagabonds.

The statute law was, in the reign of Charles the Second, sufficiently severe to protect the woods from being burnt or destroyed, if severity of punishment operated to that effect ; and the laws respecting vagrancy, were at that time, not less penal : if any additional severity might have been necessary, the vagrant act, of recent memory, is not deficient in that respect. If severity of statute law will not protect our woods from burning and destruction by the poor, will the law of settlements do it ? Certainly it is not the probable effect arising from the confinement of the poor to parishes where they cannot obtain a fair market-price for their labour, that they should pay respect to those wastes and woody tracks, which produce no call for agricultural industry ; the reasons adduced in the preamble to the act of settlements, must therefore fall to the ground, and the inducement to the enacting clauses will then remain ; that the poor will put themselves into a situation to live at the least possible

possible expence to their neighbours, by going where they can find employment, and where they are most likely to maintain themselves. And ought they not to be permitted so to do, unless other consequences than those stated in the preamble to the act restraining them, or at the least those consequences themselves, are to be apprehended?

The effect most to be apprehended is; that such liberty might tend to the encouragement of vagrancy, or such a wandering plan of life, as would not permit parish-officers, if fortunately they should be so inclined, to introduce any settled industrious mode of education among their children; as such an education is one of the most desirable objects to be obtained in the discipline of the poor; it may be proper to modify that restraint which is thought necessary to be retained over them, so as to be most conducive to this end; for although the present execution of the poor laws proves, in general; either that the overseers are ignorant of their power in this respect, or, which is more probable, dislike the trouble of attending to youthful industry; yet it requires no extraordinary prophetic foresight to assert, that this  
must

must become, and shortly, a serious part of their office ; or we shall find what the French Committee of Mendicity have asserted to be too true ; that the system of our poor laws, as at present executed, “ is the most destructive political gangrene in the English constitution.”

If the poor were permitted to remove from place to place, as best suited the interests of industry ; it would be reasonable, that the same authority which granted them the liberty, should connect it with such regulations as are necessary to the safety and advantage of the state ; which might probably be effected by preventing that liberty, which was intended for the encouragement of industry, degenerating into vagrancy ; by making it of immediate use, in diminishing the expences of their maintenance ; and by offering a prospect of advantage to posterity, from the certain good tendency of an industrious education.

To effect the first end, box-clubs should be the means ; which should be obligatory on all the poor while in health, and without a family of children ; or possibly the *Lex trium liberorum* might with propriety be the point of exemp-



exemption; but those who migrate, as the only good reason for their migration must be larger wages, should contribute a larger proportion of their earnings; if one-thirty-sixth were the general proportion, one-twenty-fourth might be a proper proportion of the earnings of those who leave their parishes.

Government has an undoubted right, on every principle of natural justice, to direct, in some measure, the education of those children whose parents are chargeable to society; and this arises from the reciprocity on the part of government, to preserve all the governed from perishing by want.

Where there are seminaries instituted for educating children in habits of industry, the poor should be compelled to send their children to them in those parishes where they reside; the migrated families, by the alternative of the attendance of their children at the school of industry, or an order of removal of themselves to their place of settlement.

These terms being complied with; the poor might, without fear of their becoming vagrants, or neglect of industrious habits in the rising generation, be permitted to seek

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their bread, by means of labour and industry, wherever good wages will enable them best to find it; and a foundation of a fund would be laid for their maintenance when in distress, which would be productive in proportion as the number of the migrants increased, or in other words, as the total sum earned by the industry of the nation increased.

Taking one of the heads of Sir William Young's bill as the ground work of our proposed regulation, the general idea would stand thus.

No person shall be removed to his place of settlement until actually chargeable to the parish where he resides, provided that he has made oath, before two neighbouring magistrates, of the place of his legal settlement; and that, from the time of his first residence in the parish, he has contributed, according to the rules of the society, one-twenty-fourth part of his earnings to the box-club of that parish; and hath also, from the same time, sent his children, above the age of six years and under the age of eleven, to the school of industry in the said parish; and having so resided ten years in any parish, without receiving  
any

any parochial relief whatever, he shall obtain a settlement where he hath so resided.

It would farther tend to prevent vagrancy, if the pauper should be obliged to obtain the approbation of two magistrates, residing near the parish from whence he removes; testified by their signing their consent, and specifying the place to which they allow the pauper to go, prior to his actual migration; which consent should be immediately delivered to the overseers of the parish where he intends to reside. But no evidence that these conditions were not complied with, should be allowed to be given in any contest at law as to his place of settlement; because it would tend to create litigation, and could be of no other service; the magistrates having the power to punish the omission by sending the pauper back to his place of settlement.

These regulations would certainly diminish the sources of legal contests, on the variety of cases respecting settlements and certificates; and would tend to bring those disputes, which are so very inimical to the pockets of the parishioners and the peace of the parish, into a very narrow compass; they would also open to



the poor the means of carrying their industry to the best market; at the same time that the obligation to contribute to a box-club in a greater proportion than if they had remained where they were settled, might tend to keep them from migrating, unless the prospect of advantage was considerable; the being obliged to send their children to a school of industry would also check that spirit of vagrancy, which idleness, during infancy and youth, is apt to promote; but these obligations proceed on the idea that box-clubs and schools of industry were established by authority of parliament throughout that part of the kingdom subject to the poor laws; for vain would be the regulations, if, for want of these institutions, they could not be complied with; and it is much to be feared, that, whatever may be the excellence of them, they will not institute themselves throughout the kingdom in general, without the assistance of the legislature; although the good arising from them is already experienced in many parishes.

There seems uniformly one false principle, that is inconsistent with that degree of freedom, which is the best inheritance of all of

us, constantly pervading this head of the laws respecting the poor, exclusive of the restraint which the law of certificates occasions ; the principle alluded to, is the right claimed by the officers of a parish to remove those whom they may deem *likely* to become chargeable ; the undefined idea of what *may possibly happen in future*, should not be permitted to operate in the latitude it does ; for it is not necessary to the interest of the parish, but in a most insignificant degree ; and even that trifling interest would disappear instantly, on the principle being exploded, and a general practice diametrically opposite prevailing ; all men are liable, as the law at present stands, to be taken by a warrant before a magistrate, if a parish officer thinks proper to declare his belief that the individual is *likely* to become chargeable ; and this assertion may sometimes be founded on pique, interest, or private resentment ; consequently we are all liable to this impertinent intrusion, and, what is worse, to an examination into our circumstances and situation in life ; the knowledge of which should be in the power of every man to preserve in his own breast, unless he be so sus-

picious a character that the safety of society, or of individuals, requires a public investigation of his situation and circumstances; but, in this case, the exposition of the private concerns of an individual is founded solely on this trifling plea of interest—that a parish may not expend a trifle by *once* relieving him.

Therefore, the paltry consideration of a few pence, in the expenditure of an individual parish, exposes all his Majesty's subjects to the possibility of this disagreeable scrutiny into their private affairs; and this on the unfounded assertion of a parish officer, that a *reliant* *may* become chargeable; a very disagreeable consequence, flowing from a very insignificant cause:—actual relief received from a parish ought to be the only case where such an intrusion should take place; and that rule, if universal, would produce no general, or even partial inconvenience; and it would, at the same time, relieve all from the possibility of being placed in an humiliating, vexatious, and disagreeable situation, without sufficient reason.

LETTER



## L E T T E R XXXI.

**T**HE natural right of the poor to the assistance of society, when, by misfortune, ill health, or age, their labour is not equal to their support; and also the propriety of allowing them the liberty of removal from one place to another, for the purpose of rendering their labour more equal to their support, having been discussed; this paper shall be dedicated to the purpose of examining the expediency of raising the price of labour; desiring that the reader will recollect, agricultural labour is principally adverted to; and that the data from which the conclusions will be drawn, may be found among the evidence which has been collected in some of the former papers on this subject.

It has already been asserted as a truth, in a manner self-evident, that the price of labour should be equal to maintain the labourer in that situation of life he occupies in society, whether as a husband, a father, or a son; consequently that it should enable him, while

in health, to support a wife, children, or aged parents; and the evidence produced, has tended to prove, that it was so in former times; before the establishment of a compulsive maintenance, and before those adscititious and enervating luxuries of life, spirits and tea, impaired the strength of the parent, debilitated his progeny, and wasted the produce of his labour.

The rating of wages, by authority of parliament, might also, in those days, have tended to preserve a just proportion between the price of labour and the necessaries of life; for if the practice had not that good effect, it operated to the disadvantage of the labourer; because, by limiting the price it restrained the spirit of competition; all the statutes, from the reign of Edward the Third to that of James the First, on that head, being restrictive against giving *more*, and not compulsive to give the price rated by the justices; consequently they tended rather to reduce than to raise the price of labour.

But let us examine how the proportion was preserved in times antecedent to the establishment of a poor's rate, and how it is preserved now, and let us make a comparison of the facts;

facts; the means are in our hands, and the result may establish a serviceable truth.

In the twenty-third of Edward the Third, the price of agricultural labour was regulated in many instances by parliament; two of these shall be taken; harvest wages, reaping corn by the day, three-pence; threshing wheat, by the quarter, two-pence-half-penny; in that year, 1338, the price of wheat, by the quarter, was three shillings and four-pence; therefore a day's work in harvest would not produce quite one-thirteenth of a quarter of wheat; and the price of threshing a quarter was one-sixteenth of its value; in 1792, the price of a day's harvest work, in the cheapest counties, was, at the least, half a crown, and the price of threshing wheat was also about half a crown a quarter; the average price of wheat throughout the year, might be about two guineas a quarter; the labour of threshing therefore was to the price of the wheat, as one to sixteen or seventeen; and a day's harvest wages bore the same proportion to the same quantity of wheat;—in the years 1387, 1389, wheat was threshed at four-pence a quarter, and reaped at seven-pence an acre; in 1388 the price of wheat was



was four shillings a quarter ; in this instance the price of threshing shall be taken, because the price of reaping an acre of wheat must then, as now, depend on many circumstances, and rise or fall accordingly ; threshing then produced one-twelfth of the value of the wheat ;—in 1446, a reaper received five-pence a day ; the price of wheat was in 1445, four shillings and six-pence a quarter, and in 1447, eight shillings ; therefore a day's harvest work, at that time, produced one-tenth of a quarter of wheat ; in 1445, the year preceding the price of reaping, and the year succeeding it, one-nineteenth yearly ; the *Chronicon Pretiosum* giving no instance of the price of wheat in 1446 ; the average of these prices of labour is one-fourteenth of a quarter of wheat ; and the price of the same articles of labour in the year 1792 having been taken at one-sixteenth of the value of a quarter of wheat, it is manifest that the price of agricultural labour was then somewhat higher, in proportion to the price of wheat, than at present ; that is to say, as a fourteenth is to a sixteenth : which would increase harvest wages to about three shillings a day, and threshing wheat

wheat to three shillings a quarter, supposing the average price of wheat to be two guineas a quarter.

So few instances occur when the price of wheat and the price of agricultural labour can be obtained in the same year, before any regular registers of the price of wheat were kept, that the exactness of the average cannot be depended on; nor is the calculation pretended to be correctly exact, but it is apprehended that both the average and the calculation are sufficiently so, to warrant the conclusion that is inferred from them; and it should also be recollected, that no compulsory maintenance for the poor was established, during the period in which these averages have been taken.

In 1661, the justices of Essex, in their Easter sessions, fixed the rates of agricultural labour for that year; the reaper one shilling and ten-pence a day harvest wages; the thresher exactly the same price per quarter; the price of wheat was, by the Windsor table, 3l. 2s. 2d; by which it is manifest, that a day's harvest wages, and the threshing a quarter of wheat, would not either of them purchase one thirty-fifth part of the quarter; at  
this

this period the compulsory maintenance had been established near forty years.

In 1682, among the wages of servants and labourers in husbandry, rated by the justices at their quarter-sessions, holden at Bury, in Suffolk, and recorded in Sir John Cullum's History of Hawstead, we find that a man-reaper's wages in harvest was one shilling and eight-pence, a common labourer in summer one shilling, in winter ten-pence; the average price of wheat we find, by the Windsor table, to have been that year 1*l.* 19*s.* 1*d.*; a day's harvest wages would therefore, in 1682, purchase one twenty-third part of a quarter of wheat; a day's common wages in summer about a thirty-ninth part; a day's common wages in winter about a forty-seventh part; it should be mentioned, that these prices are all without meat and drink.

In 1668, Mr. Gregory King computed the ordinary income of labourers and out-servants at fifteen pounds a year, to a family which he supposed to consist of three and a half persons; and he computed the weekly expence of such families to be about twenty-pence a head. About the same time, Lord Chief Justice

Hale



Hale computed the necessary expences of a labourer's family, consisting of six persons, the father, mother, two children able to do something, and two not able, at ten shillings a week, or twenty-six pounds a year; the average price of wheat was, by the Windsor table that year, 1l. 15s. 6d.; and the average price for twenty-five years, taken annually, from 1655 to 1680, during which period of time the Chief Justice must have made his calculation, was generally above 2l. 5s. never under 2l. 2s. a quarter; we have seen the rates of wages at the Essex quarter-sessions in Easter 1661, and at the Suffolk quarter-sessions in 1682, the inference, with respect to the ratio which agricultural labour bore, when wages were rated, to the necessities of life, can easily be drawn; and when drawn, will prove that the practice was not favourable to the labourer.

The difficulty of obtaining instances of the prices of labour, in years so long passed away, prevent me from selecting a sufficient number of facts to form a very exact average; but it is presumed that sufficient has been done to lay a foundation for the following assertions.

First.

First.—That before the rate operated to the relief of the poor, their wages were larger, in proportion to the price of wheat, than at present.

Secondly.—That since the operation of the forty-third of Elizabeth, by raising a sum in every parish for their relief, their wages have been less, in proportion to the price of wheat, during the *last century* than at *present*, as the same quantity of work will now purchase a sixteenth of a quarter of wheat which in 1661 would purchase only a thirty-ninth part, and in 1682 a twenty-third part of a quarter of wheat only. To judge how such a price for labour, so disproportioned to the price of wheat, affected the poor's rate in those days, is not at this distance of time in our power, except in those parishes where accident may have preserved the account of the rate raised in those years; and, in such a case, some idea might be formed by comparing the then rate with the present, supposing the state of population and of the manufactures to be also known.

Thirdly.—It appears, not only that the rating of wages tended to depress the price of labour;

labour ; but that before the poor partook of a revenue raised from the pockets of their fellow-subjects ; the unfeeling hand of legislation having precluded misery from its last resource, the compassion of the wealthy, by restraining them from begging, and their opulent neighbours from giving them relief, through fear of imprisonment ; the poor must have been in a most deplorable situation, and must have continued so until the beginning of the reign of Henry the Eighth, when justices of the peace were empowered to licence aged and impotent persons, to beg within certain districts ; this also will, in some measure, account for the deficiency of our population in those times, it being in the fourteenth century not one-fourth of what it is at present.

Therefore, although the price of labour might be, through the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, higher, in proportion to the price of wheat, than at present ; the rough temper of the times, instanced by the concurrent acts of legislation, left the poor without any resource in the hour of distress, except from the ecclesiastical estates ; and, with respect to the time passed since the forty-  
third



third of Elizabeth, it has been seen, that the price of labour was much lower, in proportion to the price of wheat, during the last century, than at present.

The conclusion which follows from the few facts that apply to the question, is, that in the three centuries preceding the poor's rate, they were in a worse situation than at present, although their wages were more proportionate to the necessaries of life ; because there was no resource left to them from private charity, and a compulsive maintenance was not established, to which they might apply in the hour of distress ; and through the seventeenth century, after a compulsive maintenance had been established, they appear to have received wages less proportionate to the necessaries of life than they do at present ; consequently their present situation, with their present wages, is preferable to their former.

LETTER

## L E T T E R    XXXII.

**B**UT it may be objected, that the instances produced, having mentioned the concurrent price of only one material article of life, wheat; the others, as cloathing, fire, house-rent, butcher's meat, and a long train of *et ceteras*, have not been glanced at.

This difficulty may be solved by a shorter, and probably a more satisfactory proof, than a detail of the concurrent prices of a long category of articles, at the several periods when the foregoing notices were taken, were such an accurate detail in our power; the proof alluded to is the opinion of Adam Smith on this subject, who says, "The money price of corn regulates that of all other home-made commodities; the real value of every other commodity being measured and determined by the proportion which its average money price bears to the money price of corn."

The detail of the facts and arguments, from which this principle is established by Dr. Smith, would probably be thought tedious and unnecessary,

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cessary,

cessary, having his name as authority for the opinion; a shorter proof may be thought a better proof; and a plain and intelligible *forites* may effect as much in a few words as a long argument in many pages.—For instance:

The labour of man should be equal to his sustenance, the principal article of which is corn.—By the labour of our poor are home-made commodities produced and manufactured; what produces or manufactures commodities is the measure of their value;—what sustains the poor is the efficient means of their labour. Corn principally is the sustenance of the poor—therefore corn is the measure of the value of home-made commodities; or, in other words, the money price of corn regulates the money price of those articles, which are necessary to the sustenance of the poor.

Another point to be settled before we proceed, is to ascertain the articles which common consent will agree to call the *necessaries of life*; because no wages of labour will provide for a consumption, *ad libitum*, of every article of food and cloathing, which a poor family may *choose* to make use of; and, at the same time, a deduction of every article not absolutely



folutely neceffary to the fuffentation of human life, would leave fo little to be purchafed by the labour of man, as to admit of no doubt on the queftion.

No writer has delivered his fentiments on this topic with that precifion of idea, that appropriate happinefs of expreffion, and, what is beft, with that full knowledge of the fubject, as the fame writer we have before referred to; his opinion therefore will, with no fmall degree of propriety, ftand in the place of any fluctuating defultory notions, which humanity, miffed by luxury, might throw out; this one idea being granted, that the comforts of life and the neceffaries are different things; the firft are properly within the reach of thofe whose property, ingenuity, or induftry puts them beyond the probability of seeking relief from the rate levied for the poor; the laft comprehend only thofe articles which are neceffary to the prefervation of human life in health, and the perfon in fuch cloathing as not to offend the eye of decency and propriety.

By neceffaries, Adam Smith fays, he underftands not only the commodities which are indifpenfably neceffary for the fupport of life;

but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people to be without ; and explains himself, by admitting, that a linen shirt and leather shoes are among those things which the poorest creditable person of either sex in this country would be ashamed to appear in public without ; salt, candles, leather, soap, and fuel, he admits as necessaries, to a certain degree of consumption.

Grain, and other vegetables, with the help of milk, cheese, and butter, or oil where no butter is to be had, he affirms, are known from experience, without any assistance from butcher's meat, to afford the most nourishing and invigorating diet \*; and therefore he doubts whether butcher's meat be a necessary of life any where ; but, not determining that point, he calls all other things luxuries, speaking of articles of diet, without meaning, by this appellation, to throw the smallest degree of reproach on a temperate use of them ;—he says, “ Beer and ale in Great Britain, and wine even in wine countries, I call luxuries : a man

\* See page 287, of the 19th volume of the Annals of Agriculture, where an extract from the Editor's Tour in Ireland is quoted, much in point with Adam Smith's opinion.

of any rank may, without any reproach, abstain totally from such liquors ; nature does not render them necessary for the support of life, and custom no where renders it indecent to live without them."

Many names, and some of eminence in the political, as well as in the literary world, have given sanction to strictures on our police respecting the poor, from the time of Lord Verulam to the present day ; but this particular topic, the wages of labour, has not been glanced at until lately ; from hence we may collect, that it was not thought a striking object ; and may also venture to assert, that no material, no glaring disproportion subsisted between wages and the necessaries of life, during those times, when Bacon, Lord Hale, King, Davenant, Firmin, Defoe, Locke, Sir Josiah Child, Cary, Hay, Alcock, Lord Hillsborough, Sir Richard Lloyd, Fielding, and Burn, turned their attention to this subject ; for, had any material disproportion prevailed in the opinions of these writers, or any of them, that disproportion would have been suggested as a cause of the mischief complained of, have been adverted to, and a remedy proposed ;



posed ; but we can collect no arguments from their writings, either for or against a rise of wages ; and as great a disproportion subsisted in their times between the price of corn and the price of labour as at present ; their silence may therefore be construed into an acquiescence, that no foundation of complaint existed.

Indeed no hints of any weight, no assertions of serious authority, can be found in the writings of our forefathers, on which we may reason, as on a solid foundation ; building our argument on the respect due to a great name ; which, when fact, experience, strict demonstration, and analogical inference fail us, may serve as a reasonable cause of belief, though by no means of implicit conviction.

But the same excellent, moral, and political casuist, whose treatise on the Wealth of Nations we have just had recourse to, gives his decided opinion on this topic, which fell directly under his attention.

He informs us, that “ in Great Britain the wages of labour seem to be evidently more than what is precisely necessary to bring up a family.

“ The

“ The real recompense of labour, the real quantity of the necessaries and conveniences of life, which it can procure to the labourer, has, during the course of the present century, increased perhaps in a still greater proportion than its money price

“ The wages of labour have been continually increasing since the time of Henry the Eighth ; and in the greater part of the branches of trade, the profit of stock has been diminishing.

“ In Great Britain, the wages of country labour approach nearer to those of manufacturing labour, than they are said to have done in the last century, or in the beginning of the present.”

These extracts plainly declare the opinion that this author held on this subject ; those who wish to see the ground work of his reasoning, will find full cause to be satisfied with the solidity of his observations, and the precision of his arguments ; by perusing books the first, the second, the fourth, and fifth of this valuable work.

Mr. Townshend concurs in the same opinion ; he says, in his Dissertation on the Poor

Laws ; “ if we take the average of sixty years, which terminated at the commencement of the present century, we shall find the price of wheat to have been six shillings and fourpence halfpenny per bushel, whereas for the subsequent sixty years it was only five shillings; and for the last twenty years, ending with the year 1782, not more than six shillings and sixpence; yet, during that long period, in which provisions were the cheapest, the poor's rates were continually advancing; that this distress does not arise from the high price of soap, leather, candles, salt, and other small articles needful in a family, will appear not only from the superior advance in the price of labour, in the proportion of six to four within a century, but from hence, that where the price of labour is the highest, and provisions cheapest, there the poor rates have been most exorbitant.”

Mr. Howlett is the only writer of reputation, who has advanced an opinion different from that which has been generally received, or silently acquiesced in, by all who have in past times left us their thoughts on the state of the poor, and diametrically opposite to the sentiments



sentiments of Adam Smith and Mr. Townshend, who have very lately had the subject under their consideration.

Mr. Howlett says, in his pamphlet, which has been already noticed, part the second, section the first, “ the great and real cause of the increased proportion of the poor, as well as of the increased expence of maintaining them ; is, that the price of labour has *not* advanced so much as the price of provisions.” And he concludes with this observation, “ either raise the wages of the poor, or give them provisions as they had them forty years ago.”

Laying aside, for a time, all the respect that is due to the authority of great names ; leaving at present out of the question, the uniform assertions of many eminent writers on this subject, from the age of Queen Elizabeth to the present, who have one and all complained of the profligacy of the poor ; a profligacy which seems to have gathered strength, in proportion as relief at a vestry, or by the order of a magistrate, supplied the place of the wages of industry ; and who have attributed the increase of this poverty and expence in their maintenance, to that cause principally ;

pally ; let us meet this assertion, and examine it by test of fact, adduced by Mr. Howlett himself.

The average expence of the poor, the three years preceding 1776, is produced ; and the average of the expence in the years 1783, 1784, 1785 is also produced ; the first amounts to 1,529,780l. os. 1d. per annum ; the last to 2,004,238l. 5s. 11d. the difference between them is 474,458l. 5s. 10d. If the price of the necessaries of life increased in the last period in an equal proportion with the expences of the poor, that is to say, between a third and a fourth more than their price at the first period ; the assertion might be warranted by the consequence, in its fullest extent ; for the price of labour certainly has not risen a third, or even a fourth ; but let us examine the fact.

During the years of the first period, the average price of wheat was, in 1773, 2l. 19s. 1d ; in 1774, 2l. 15s. 1d ; in 1775, 2l. 11s. 3d ; the average of the three years is 2l. 15s 1½d.

During the years of the second period, the average price of wheat was, in 1783, 2l. 7s. 1d.  
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in 1784, 2l. 7s. 2d. in 1785, 1l. 16s. 11d.; the average of the three years is 2l. 3s. 8½d.

Therefore the price of the necessaries of life, or, in other words, the money price of corn, which regulates the price of the necessaries of life, *i. e.* home-made commodities, was in the last period cheaper than in the first, in the proportion of between a fourth and a fifth; and the expences of the poor in the last period were greater than their expences in the first, between a third and a fourth.

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L E T T E R XXXIII.

**M**R. Howlett supposes that each individual consumes at least a quarter of wheat a year; a family of six therefore consumes six quarters annually; corn therefore costs such a family annually, on the average above-mentioned, the three years preceding 1776 inclusively, 16l. 10s. 9d. and 13l. 2s. 3d. the three years preceding 1785 inclusively; consequently the difference between those sums,  
3l. 8s.



3l. 8s. 6d. remains in the pocket of the family, to expend in other necessaries, in the last period more than in the first; and taking the number of labouring poor individuals in England and Wales to be at six millions and a quarter, as Mr. Howlett states them, during both the periods; the whole of their expenditure for wheat would, in the last period, be less than in the former 3,567,708l.; and we have seen that their expences in the last period, have exceeded their expences in the first near half a million.

Having substantiated this fact, we will now examine the articles which the *taxes*, during the American war, had increased in price in 1785, beyond that in 1776; it has been proved, that the price of corn regulates the price of the other articles of necessary consumption; therefore as corn was cheaper, they could not be materially dearer, but by the operation of some tax.

Had the American war, in 1785, occasioned any additional duty on any article which may be called a necessary of life? Was any duty laid on milk, cheese, butter, soap, leather, candles, butcher's meat, linen, cloth, firing, to which

which they were not equally subject in 1776, if subject to any tax at all? The answer is a negative: therefore how the price of all, or any of them, could be increased one-fifth, by the means of taxation, I cannot discover; neither can it be granted as a fact; that leather, soap, candles, butter, cheese, cost one-fifth more in 1785 than in the years immediately preceding the American war; that these articles might some of them be somewhat dearer, may be fact, but although the exact proportion cannot easily be ascertained, the assertion may be safely ventured that they had not encreased a fifth in price; beer, spirits, tea, sugar, snuff, tobacco, were increased in price during this war; but as these cannot be numbered among the necessaries of life; and the first, the only article, the use of which can be approved of, is generally found the labourer in agriculture by his master; it cannot form a general article of unavoidable expence.

We have seen, that the average price of wheat during the first period, was so much more than during the last, as to make a difference of 3l. 8s. 6d. annually, in the expenditure

ture of a family of six people; and the sum it costs such a family for corn in the last period, is more than half the probable earnings of a labourer's family; therefore the expences of that family, in all other articles of consumption, could not be increased more than it had saved in the proportional price of wheat; had the price of those articles increased one-fifth, as Mr. Howlett has asserted.

Where then rests the proof, that the number of poor, and the increased expence of maintaining them, arises from the price of labour not having risen in proportion to the price of the necessaries of life? And where do we perceive the cause for an increase of agricultural wages, which are known to have risen two-pence in the shilling in daily labour since the last century, and in task-work much more? The price of corn has not risen in any such a proportion, and the price of corn regulates the price of home-made commodities; if greater wages are given, they will be given for expences in articles widely different from the necessaries of life; they will be given for the encouragement of idleness, by the increase of the excise revenue: Idleness is the root of  
all



all evil,—articles of excise are the moisture which nourishes that root.

But while our reason can find no cause for a rise of wages ; both that and our humanity plead strongly for some encouragement to industry ; because it is apprehended, that a prospect of reward is a more active and honourable inducement than a fear of punishment ; so thought and so wrote William Shakespeare, in 1581. The human mind is sooner roused to action by a hope of rising, than by a fear of falling : that apprehension cannot pervade the mass of labouring people ;

So safely low the poor, they cannot fall.

But no situation in this country should be beneath a probability of advancement ; hope should be permitted to travel through life with all of us ; when that pleasing companion, that chearful ray of untried felicity, is excluded from our sight, our journey is gloomy indeed ; despondence and apathy then are associated with us ; and misery, as Trinculo says, acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows.

The consolidation of small farms ; where the practice prevails to that extent, as to leave

no

no small occupation for the labourer, who might have saved money sufficient; or, by a course of honest and industrious conduct, have obtained credit sufficient to stock and farm a few acres of land; most certainly operates to a great discouragement of industry.

In parishes where this practice so generally prevails, there is no other chance for him, whose manual labour *tills* the land, to *reap* the produce of it; than by occupying the glebe of the parish, or those lands which have been left in trust for the uses of particular charities; the proper tenants of such lands, and also of the glebe, if the incumbent does not occupy it himself, are the industrious poor; and, in such cases, the parish rates should become the security for the rent.

If box-clubs were generally established, such of the subscribers as have continued their payments a given number of years, who might be thought by the parish officers worthy to be trusted with a small occupation of land, should be permitted to draw out of the stock, the amount of their subscriptions; deducting such sums as they may have received from the club, whenever such an opportunity of occupying land

land might offer : in that case, those who have migrated from their parishes to obtain greater wages, and have paid a larger proportion of their earnings to the stock, as was proposed, would have a proportional greater chance of rising in their situations.

To appropriate any part of the compulsory maintenance, to the encouragement of youthful industry, might possibly be thought an unwarrantable perversion ; but it certainly would not be an illegal application of part of the poor's rate ; for it should be in our recollection, that to set the poor at work, was one great cause which induced the legislature to institute a poor's rate ; and it must be acknowledged, that this rate can be diminished by no means so proper, and beneficial to the public, as by the promotion of general industry ; and we should also bear in our minds, that industrious habits grow by encouragement more thriftily, than by compulsion.

Every encouragement given by agricultural societies, tends to this end : rewards for good and skilful operations in husbandry,—for long and honest services,—for bringing up, without parish assistance, a family of children,—schools



of industry, with prizes to the most deserving, —all tend to excite and preserve a spirit of industrious emulation, productive of the best effects; a spirit well exchanged for that idle thievish disposition, too prevalent at present among the rising generation of the poor.

The overseers of the poor, in their respective parishes, possess numberless opportunities of encouraging industry; the application that a poor person is obliged, by the statute, to make to them for relief, before he is authorized to be relieved by the next magistrate; gives them ample opportunities to obtain information of the industry, the œconomy, the earnings, the expenditure of the person applying; when the overseers perceive one family in want of parish relief, and the adjoining family in a similar situation, with respect to number, age, and capability of maintaining themselves; not only not in want, but possessing a visible property; they must feel that the duty of their office requires some investigation of this apparent paradox; and if, on inquiry, they find; that honest industry and rigid œconomy places the one family above want, and that idleness and waste reduces the other to distress;

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distress; if they dole to the one necessary relief, which is more than they deserve; they should, by every encouragement, hold the other out as an example to be imitated;—the natural claims of the one on society are equivocal,—the merits of the other are certain.

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L E T T E R   XXXIV.

**I**T appears illiberal, to refuse assent to the only reasonable excuse that can be alledged in behalf of the poor, for the miserable degree of poverty in which they are plunged, and for the increasing burthen of expence to the public in their maintenance; an excuse which, if it existed, would throw the blame from *their* shoulders to *those* of their employers.

It would also ill become any man, occupying a considerable portion of landed property, and residing in a country where the general appearance of his labouring neighbours indi-

cates such distress, as when it meets the eye must affect the heart; and which distress arises, either from their wages not being sufficient to purchase the necessaries of life; or from a deficiency of œconomy and industry in the poor themselves; to deny the first cause, and assert the last to be a fact: such conduct would be inexcusable in any man; unless from candid investigation he was firmly persuaded of the fact, and was conscious that such a representation was the language of truth; and, in that case, it becomes, in an inquiry of this nature, his duty to make his opinion public, and to assert, that the necessaries of life are not risen in price, more than agricultural wages.

Such is the opinion that the last pages of this inquiry have attempted to establish as truth; and if they have succeeded, the following consequence, which results from it, is apparent and cannot be contradicted:—That œconomy and prudence are necessary to make what the poor earn go as far towards the support of life as possible; and industry also is necessary to make their time as productive as possible; for if it be true that agricultural labour



labour is as well paid, all things being considered, as it ought to be; there is no way to increase the earnings of the poor, but by increasing the general quantity of industry; this is therefore the point to which our attention should be directed.

Mr. Locke's opinion has been mentioned, with respect to the relaxation of discipline among the poor; to this he attributed, in 1697, their misery and our expences; this opinion was extracted from a collection of pamphlets concerning the poor, published at Edinburgh in 1787, which referred to Mr. Chalmer's Estimate of the Comparative State of Great Britain.

The whole of Mr. Locke's memorial, as one of the Commissioners of the Board of Trade, was not then in print; nor was any other stress laid on it, than such, as the opinion of a man of his abilities and solid judgment demanded; but the last edition of the pamphlet, published for the benefit, and giving an account of the institution and management of the schools of industry in the county of Lincoln, has thrown a much stronger light on this memorial; has placed the whole of it

before our view ; and, by so doing, has connected the practice and experience of a most excellent regulation for the encouragement of youthful industry, with the sentiments of a vigorous and highly cultivated mind.

This Report, from the Board of Trade, drawn up by Mr. Locke, contains not *his* opinion only, but that also of *other commissioners* ; founded on a full and mature examination both of facts and arguments, produced from a multiplicity of proofs, which they had full power to call for ; it originated at the instigation of William the Third, who had the regular employment of the poor much at heart, and mentioned the subject to his parliament, on opening the session in 1699, as a measure he very much interested himself in ; and there was accordingly an act of parliament drawn up, that still exists, although, owing to the altercations between him and his parliament, which took place about this time, it was never passed into a law.

One capital feature in this excellent memorial is, the recommendation of schools of industry ; and surely such an institution, if *ever* adviseable, is *now* adviseable ; if it was  
*ever*

~~ever~~ necessary, by a regular education, to increase the honest means of maintenance among the labouring poor, it is *now* necessary; if *ever* there was reason to fear, that the poor's rate may anticipate the sources of our national expenditure, we have *now* reason to fear it; and surely if we *ever* had cause to dread the consequences of such an anticipation to the interests of the kingdom at large, to the internal peace of its inhabitants, and to the safety of our much admired constitution; we have *now* every reason to dread the consequences of a poor's rate, which has risen upon us in times of peace and prosperity; and which will continue to rise in a greater proportion, and with increased celerity, as war, with its concomitant evils and expences, reduces our trade, impoverishes our manufacturers, and increases the demands upon us for money, the sinews of war; in an inverse proportion with our ability to contribute it.

*Fas est ab hoste doceri.*—Shall we then be inattentive to the opinions of those with whom we are now at war? An opinion delivered in times of peace; and then conceived, by those who formed the first constitution, after the



destruction of despotism in France, as particularly applicable to the intention of instituting a poor's rate throughout that kingdom, similar to that of England. Shall we pay no attention to that remarkable expression made use of by the French Committee of Mendicity, which points out our poor's rate as the most destructive gangrene of our constitution? And if that man, whose effigy in many places within the kingdom has been burnt, a ceremony that has thrown out a blaze to the reputation of his abilities, which his intentions by no means deserve, from those who are friends to the constitution of this country; if that man has ever, either in his writings, or his conversation, declared his opinion, "that the present administration of our code of poor laws will, if continued, in time effect, with certainty, that destruction of our constitution," which himself, and other enemies to this country, have attempted to bring about in a quicker manner: if such is the opinion of Thomas Paine, shall we not be taught to strengthen ourselves in that weak part which an enemy inadvertently has pointed out; to repair that breach in our citadel; to probe and cleanse

cleanse that wound which an enemy knows has been too much neglected, and now, through that neglect, threatens us with destruction? Surely the object is of importance sufficient to demand all our attention; and the attempt of an individual to excite that attention, cannot be called presumptuous, although it may be vain; cannot deserve reproof, although it may not meet with success.

Mr. Locke has reported, that if the cause of this evil be looked into; the commissioners humbly conceive it will be found to have proceeded, neither from scarcity of provisions, nor from want of employment for the poor, "since the goodness of God, he says, has blessed these times with plenty, no less than the former."

Has not the goodness of God also blessed this kingdom with plenty, since the determination of the American war? If, in 1697, this was the language of truth, and the voice of gratitude; is it not so, at least in an equal degree, at present? Has not the horn of plenty been poured of late years over this country, replete with all the fruits of the earth, in every production of art and industry? Have  
not

not our ships conveyed the overflowings of Great Britain, whose consumption borders upon waste, to all parts of the globe? And have they not returned home laden with the produce of all climes? Whatever fruits the earth has produced from the north to the south, from the east to the west; whatever commodities the art and industry of all nations manufactured; have they not been imported in barter for our productions? and has not a vast balance of trade been still in our favour? Surely then, our prosperity, in 1792, was full as remarkable as in 1697.

But let us attend to the shades of the two pictures, and consider the obscure as well as the clear; what does Mr. Locke complain of in 1697? The number of the poor, and the increase of the rate for their maintenance.— In 1697, the Board of Trade represented to the King, that the number of insolvent inhabitant houses was seven hundred and fifty thousand; which, at five inhabitants to a house, a calculation superior to what the political arithmeticians of 1690 allow, make a total of three millions seven hundred and fifty thousand poor; and that the support of all the  
poor



poor must be four hundred thousand pounds yearly.\*

In 1787, Mr. Howlett calculates the poor at six millions, and the return of the poor's rates amounted, on the average of three years, ending in 1785, to above two millions, and there is reason to believe, that these rates are still increasing: if the management of the poor in 1697 wanted regulation, does it not in 1793?

In 1697, Mr. Locke suggested that schools of industry were the means to increase the quantity of labour throughout the kingdom, and to decrease the expence in maintaining the poor. Sir Richard Lloyd, between fifty and sixty years afterwards, started the same idea; but it remained for a part of the county of Lincoln to reduce theory to practice; in the year 1783, and to prove that those advantages, of which others had only conceived the probability, were capable by experiment of being proved certain. It appears that those gentlemen, who formed the plan of instituting schools

\* Collection of pamphlets, concerning the poor, London and Edinburgh, 1787, p. 104. Chalmer's Estimate, p. 47.

of industry, within the district of Lindsey, in the county of Lincoln, had not at that time, nor indeed until very lately, seen the heads of Mr. Locke's plan; other counties in the kingdom may therefore now profit by uniting Mr. Locke's theoretic regulations, with the practical experience of the institution in Lincolnshire.

Nor can that experience be slightly estimated, or its good effects lightly valued, which, upon a general average of the earnings of the children, in those schools, prove clearly, that one hundred and thirty-five, between the age of eleven and twelve years, have, in ten months, taking in the depth of the five winters, ending in 1789, earned the sum of 68ol. 3s. 3d. or half a crown a week each, " exclusive of all their work, during the other ten months of each of those years; exclusive of the work of such spinners, as do not feel themselves, or are not thought by their friends, forward enough to become candidates; and exclusive of those who, having their settlement in non-subscribing parishes, and being thereby deprived of any chance for these encouragements, have yet availed themselves so far

far of the introduction of the Jersey spinning, as to earn some part of their subsistence by their own unassisted efforts, in spite of the difficulties arising from the smallness of their cottages, &c.

“ Of the two last descriptions, the number is very great, but far greater still is the multitude of those, who, by the obstinacy of parents, the neglect of overseers, or the general prejudices arising from old habits, are still trained up in sloth, vice, and misery.”

The worthy and able patron of these schools, and editor of this publication, continues his exhortations to the public, in the following words :

“ Would to God that the eyes of the nation could be opened upon this greatest of all evils; this fatal source of national profligacy and misfortune!—If the reader joins in this sincere and anxious wish, let him, after he has perused the following work of the great Mr. Locke, compare it with the many crude attempts that have been made, since the date of that report, to patch, to alter, or to abrogate, the wise and beneficial statute of Queen Elizabeth; and, if he shall then be of opinion, that parish  
working



working schools deserve a fair and full trial, let him exert his abilities and his interest, whatever they are, in procuring that trial to be sustained, by the only authority that can prevail over such obstacles, as will ever resist all private endeavours.

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## L E T T E R XXXV.

OF the same opinion with this worthy magistrate is the writer of these strictures; an opinion formed from an attention to the habits of the rising generation; from a knowledge of the real good these schools of industry have effected, where they have been instituted; and from an impression, indelibly received by precept and education in early life, that *idleness is the root of all evil*, and now confirmed by observation and experience: and most earnestly does he join in this exhortation to those who have the power; that they may also have the will, to procure a trial of schools of industry; by the authority of the statute of Elizabeth,

Elizabeth, assisted by the contributions of individuals.

It is in this report of Mr. Locke's, here alluded to, that he suggests the idea of these schools of industry, and produces the following heads of regulations respecting them.

“ The children of labouring people are an ordinary burthen to the parish, and are usually maintained in idleness; so that their labour also is generally lost to the public, till they are twelve or fourteen years old.

“ The most effectual remedy for this, that we are able to conceive, and which we therefore humbly propose, is, that working schools be set up in each parish, to which the children of all such as demand relief of the parish, above three and under fourteen years of age, whilst they live at home with their parents, and are not otherwise employed for their livelihood, by the allowance of the overseer of the poor, shall be obliged to come.

“ By this means the mother will be eased of a great part of her trouble in looking after and providing for them at home, and so be at more liberty to work; the children will be kept in much better order; be better provided  
for;

for; and, from their infancy, be inured to work, which is of no small consequence to the making of them sober and industrious all their lives after; and the parish will be either eased of this burthen, or at least of the misuse in the present management of it: for a great number of children giving a poor man a title to an allowance from the parish, this allowance is given once a week, or once a month, to the father, in money, which he, not seldom, spends on himself at the ale-house, whilst his children (for whose sake he had it) are left to suffer, or perish under the want of necessaries, unless the charity of neighbours relieve them.

“ We humbly conceive, that a man and his wife, in health, may be able, by their ordinary labour, to maintain themselves and two children; more than two children at one time, under the age of three years, will seldom happen in one family: if, therefore, all the children above three years old, be taken off their hands, those who have never so many, whilst they remain themselves in health, will not need any allowance for them.

“ We do not suppose that children of three years old will be able, at that age, to get  
their



their livelihoods at the working school; but we are sure, that what is necessary for their relief, will more effectually have that use, if it be distributed to them in bread at that school, than if it be given to their fathers in money. What they have at home from their parents, is seldom more than bread and water, and that, many of them, very scantily too; if, therefore, care be taken, that they have each of them their belly-full of bread daily at school, they will be in no danger of famishing; but, on the contrary, they will be healthier and stronger than those who are bred otherwise. Nor will this practice cost the overseer any trouble; for a baker may be agreed with to furnish and bring into the school-house, every day, the allowance of bread necessary for all the scholars that are there. And to this may be added also, without any trouble, in cold weather, if it be thought needful, a little warm water-gruel; for the same fire that warms the room, may be made use of to boil a pot of it.

“ From this method, the children will not only reap the fore-mentioned advantages, with

far less charge to the parish than what is now done for them, but they will be also thereby the more obliged to come to school and apply themselves to work, because otherwise they will have no victuals ; and also the benefit thereby, both to themselves and the parish, will daily increase : for the earnings of their labour at school every day increasing, it may reasonably be concluded, that, computing all the earnings of a child, from three to fourteen years of age, the nourishment and teaching of such a child, during that whole time, will cost the parish nothing. Whereas there is no child now which, from its birth, is maintained by the parish, but, before the age of fourteen, costs the parish fifty or sixty pounds.

“ Another advantage also of bringing poor children thus to a working school is, that by this means they may be obliged to come constantly to church every Sunday along with their school-masters or dames, whereby they may be brought into some sense of religion ; whereas ordinarily now, in their loose and idle way of breeding up, they are as utter strangers both to religion and morality, as they are to industry.

“ In

“ In order, therefore, to the more effectually carrying on of this work, to the advantage of this kingdom, we further humbly propose, that these schools be generally for spinning or knitting, or some other part of the woollen manufacture, unless in countries where the place shall furnish some other materials fitter for the employment of such poor children; in which places the choice of those materials, for their employment, may be left to the prudence and direction of the guardians of the poor of that hundred; and that the teachers, in these schools, be paid out of the poor rates, as can be agreed.

“ This, though at first setting up, it may cost the parish a little, yet we humbly conceive, that (the earnings of the children abating the charge of their maintenance, and as much work being required of each of them as they are reasonably to perform) it will quickly pay its own charges, with an overplus.

“ That, where the number of the poor children of any parish is greater than for them all to be employed in one school, they be there divided into two; and the boys and girls, if



thought convenient, taught and kept to work seperately.

“ That the handicraftsmen in each hundred be bound to take every other of their respective apprentices from amongst the boys in some one of the schools in the said hundred, without any money : which boys they may so take, at what age they please, to be bound to them till the age of twenty-three years, that so the length of time may more than make amends for the usual sums that are given to handicraftsmen with such apprentices.

“ That those also in the hundred, who keep in their hands land of their own to the value of 25l. per annum, or upwards, or who rent 50l. per annum, or upwards, may chuse out of the schools of the said hundred what boy each of them pleases, to be his apprentice in husbandry, upon the same condition.

“ That whatever boys are not, by this means, bound out apprentices before they are full fourteen, shall, at the easter meeting of the *guardians of each hundred* every year, be bound to such gentlemen, yeomen, or farmers, within the said hundred, as have the greatest number

number of acres of land in their hands, who shall be obliged to take them for their apprentices till the age of twenty-three, or bind them out, at their own cost, to some handicraftsmen ; provided always, that no such gentleman, yeoman, or farmer, shall be bound to have two such apprentices at a time.

“ That grown people also (to take away their pretence of want of work) may come to the said working schools to learn, where work shall accordingly be provided for them.

“ That the materials to be employed in these schools, and among other the poor people of the parish, be provided by a common stock in each hundred, to be raised out of a certain portion of the poor's rate of each parish as requisite ; which stock, we humbly conceive, need be raised but once ; for, if rightly managed, it will increase.”

The expression, *guardians of the hundred*, refers to a part of Mr. Locke's general plan, which is not necessarily connected with schools of industry; but it would not be difficult to put in practice this regulation, with respect to binding the children apprentice at a proper

age, without an appointment of guardians of hundreds.—The last clause proceeds on the idea, that the application of the poor's rate to this purpose, or as much of it as is necessary, is a legal application of the parish money; and that it is so, is certain, as appears by the following extract from the 43d of Elizabeth :

“ The overseers, or the greatest part of them, shall take order from time to time, by and with the consent of two or more such justices of the peace, as is aforesaid, for setting to work the children of such whose parents shall not, by the said churchwardens and overseers, or the greater part of them, be thought able to keep and maintain their children.   Sect. 1.

“ And also to raise weekly, or otherwise, &c. a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other necessary stuff to set the poor at work.”   Sect. 1.

The first step towards the establishment of schools of industry, should therefore originate from the authority of the magistrates; and the quarter-sessions might, with great propriety, promote the undertaking, by orders to the following purport :

1. The



1. The overseers of every parish are, by order of sessions, required, by virtue of the the act of parliament passed in the 43d year of Queen Elizabeth, chapter the second, and in obedience thereto, to purchase stock and materials, and to provide proper places and proper instructions to teach the children to knit and spin, of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain their children.

2. They are also required not to grant any relief in money to such parents who shall refuse to send their children, between the age of three years and nine, to the places appointed them for their instruction, and suffer them to continue there as many hours each day, as by the said overseers shall be thought fit and proper, and not to cease their attendance until discharged from the said schools, with consent of the overseers.

3. That these orders be printed, and copies of them dispersed in all parishes throughout the district.

Orders of sessions, similar to these, were issued by the quarter sessions, at Louth, in Lincolnshire, in 1783, which were followed

by propofals for the encouragement of the working poor within thofe diftricts, throughout which fchools of induftry have been inftituted.

The following are the propofals for an annual fubfcription for the working poor within certain diftricts in the county of Lincoln, which laid the foundations of the fchools of induftry in that county :

1. That every parifh, within the diftrict above-mentioned, be requested to fubfcribe a fum amounting to the proportion of 1 per cent. upon the poor's rates of the laft year.

2. That individuals, within the faid diftrict, be folicted to fubfcribe the fum of five fhillings each annually.

3. That a meeting of the fubfcribers be called as foon as conveniently may be, to chufe a committee for the management of the bufinefs of the fubfcription.

4. That premiums be given from the faid fubfcription, to fuch children, of certain ages and descriptions, within the faid diftrict, as in a given time fhall have produced the greateft quantity of work, of different kinds, and of the beft quality.

5. That

5. That these premiums shall consist in different articles of cloathing, and the highest premium in compleat cloathing. The said cloathing to be made handsome and uniform.

6. That whenever any young person shall go out to apprenticeship, or service, or be married, with the approbation of the committee, such young person shall receive from the committee a reward not less than five pounds, nor exceeding ten pounds, if he or she shall, in the course of his or her education, have received three or more of the annual premiums given by the committee. A reward not less than two pounds, and not exceeding three pounds, if he or she shall have received two of the said premiums. And a reward not less than one pound ten shillings, nor exceeding two pounds, if he or she shall have received one of the said annual premiums. If the subscription shall not be found sufficient for the above rewards, then the value of each to be lessened in proportion to the state of the subscription.

7. That premiums be also given, at the discretion of the committee, to such overseers  
of



of the poor as shall distinguish themselves in the due execution of the orders of last quarter sessions, relative to the employment of the poor.

8. That the fixing the number of annual premiums, and the value of each, shall be left to the discretion of the committee.

It should be observed, that in those parts of Lincolnshire where these schools have been established, the working poor had not been accustomed to any manufactory; and, except the labour that agriculture demanded; which, in a country where the *tract* cultivated by the plough, being small in proportion to that used for grazing; could not be sufficient, at all times of the year, to find employment for their husbandmen; the poor, consequently, were not trained to regular habits of industry; the women and children especially, had no means of increasing the income of their family, had they, in fact, been possessed of the will; which, unfortunately, they were not; but, on the contrary, the parents of children who were at these schools, made use of every means in their power to stifle, in the cradle, an institution which had youthful industry for its object;

ject ; although the fruits of that industry were an increase of income to themselves, cloathing to their children, regular manners, moral habits, honorary rewards, good characters, and a prospect of more material advantages in future. To such a degree of inveteracy was the opposition of the poor to this excellent institution arrived, that many parents have been known to beat, and otherwise ill treat their children ; for having deserved and received rewards, from those appointed to distribute the prizes.

The habits of the working poor, in Suffolk and Essex, are materially different ; as it is to be hoped they also are, in most counties in England ; the manufactures which have been established among us, in this part of the kingdom, for several centuries, have been carried on with such reputation and success, as to give names from the towns, in which they are made, to several kinds of highly valuable cloths ; by which names they are known in the most distant countries on the globe : at the same time they have raised many worthy families to opulence and respect ; and although it must be allowed, that the poor's rates have not always diminished in proportion as the manufactures  
have

have been successful, and have generally increased as the demand for goods decreased; yet, as the poor have been exercised in habits of industry, there is no fear that prejudices, similar to those in Lincolnshire, should prevail here; the temptation held forth to the children to be industrious by rewards, public exhibitions, and showy processions, which so considerably increased the expences of the institutions in Lincolnshire, will not be so necessary with us, nor in general throughout the kingdom; consequently a smaller subscription, and less encouragement from the pockets of individuals, will insure success in other counties, than was found necessary in Lincolnshire; and probably an application of a proportion of the poor's rate may no longer be necessary, than what is warranted by the letter and spirit of the clause in the forty-third of Elizabeth, authorising the overseers to take order for setting the children of the poor to work, and to raise weekly, or otherwise by taxation, &c. a convenient stock of hemp, wool, flax, &c. for that purpose.

But some subscription, similar to that proposed and carried into execution in Lincolnshire,



shire, is certainly necessary, to provide a salary for instructors, and also prizes for the most deserving; the working rooms, the materials to manufacture, and the utensils for the purpose, may undoubtedly be purchased by the poor's rate; but no act of parliament authorises the overseers to raise a sum to reward and encourage the poor, to incite them to industry, and to stir up a spirit of emulation among that most numerous class of our fellow subjects, in the most laudable exertions which can occupy the hours of human life.

There is no doubt but that the inhabitants in every county in the kingdom, by a laudable patriotic spirit, which is constantly manifesting itself in so many splendid instances, to the honour of the country and of the age, would be induced to stand forward with a subscription to this purpose, were they impressed with a conviction of the expediency, the utility, and practicability of the measure; to attempt such an impression shall be the aim of the next Letter on this subject.

## L E T T E R XXXVI.

NO reliance shall be placed on a train of inferences, which might in this case follow each other with all the authority of self-evident propositions; we will not at present rely on those deductions, which plain reason and common sense must make from so universally acknowledged a principle; as, that the riches of a nation are in proportion to its industry, and its industry depends on the habits imbibed by its young people; but we will for a time suppose, that it is become the business of the writer to weaken and diminish in the mind of his readers, their respect for, and reliance on those arguments, in favour of schools of industry, which he is not able to confute.

The propriety of the plan shall first be supposed to be attacked on this ground; that allowing it to be no *illegal* appropriation of part of the poor's rates, to apply a small sum towards raising a stock for poor children to work out, and to teach them to earn a livelihood; yet it would be improper, because common  
experience,

experience, as instanced by the returns of the overseers in the three years ending in 1785, has proved, that it has been their general practice to apply a very small portion of the poor's rate in the purchase of stock for the poor to work up ; not above a hundred and thirty-third part of the total raised, or about fifteen thousand pounds of the whole sum ; and that this has been principally for the use of *grown people*, who are less likely to waste and spoil the stock than *children*.

That, where the wants of the poor are so pressing, as to occasion the sum raised for their relief to be inadequate to the purpose, the appropriating a larger portion to a precarious advantage would be improper.

That, the attempt to raise a sum by a general voluntary subscription, would, if it succeeded, have the effect of an additional rate : if it did not succeed ; the money applied from the poor's rate would be thrown away by the failure of the plan ; therefore, in both cases, the attempt is improper.

That the same objections which apply to the propriety of the plan, would equally apply to its expediency ; and there are several  
other



other observations which may be brought to prove it not expedient.

The only means of employing the children, and the only kind of handicraft they are intended to learn, is knitting and spinning; these employments, however proper for girls, cannot be thought so for boys; a more active habit being necessary to bring up men to a life of agricultural labour, than the almost sedentary employment of the wheel; and it has been experienced, that habits of life, obtained by confinement, unnerve the man, and render him less fit for those occupations for which the poor should be educated; for instance, a taylor or shoemaker seldom becomes active and laborious, even though he may be industrious; the soldiers and sailors, that come from the spinning wheel or the loom, are not so likely to be equal to a discharge of their military duties, and to the hardships of their profession, as those from the plough, or the saw; nor is a spinning school so likely to teach boys to go aloft as the mason's scaffold.

Besides, what will be done with the produce of the schools of industry? where will you find a sale for the yarn and the stockings?  
and

and unless a market can be found we shall lose both stock and block ; and shall consequently expend no inconsiderable portion of the poor's rate, in teaching our poor children an art, which neither ourselves can, at present, or they, in future, turn to a profitable account.

The schools which are alluded to, as having been established in Lincolnshire, have an advantage over similar schools of spinning and knitting, in most other counties: they were established for the express purpose of encouraging a manufacture, for which the *long wool of Lincolnshire*, is particularly proper ; the sale of the staple commodity of their county, was the principal object that the promoters of these schools had in view—in other counties, if Jersey or worsted spinning is to be the employment; the manufacture of the staple commodity of two or three counties alone, will be the object ; and in proportion as the distance increases, where these schools are encouraged, from the counties where the long wool is produced; in the same proportion will the expence of the carriage of the raw commodity be increased ; and as the distance increases from the northern counties, so will

the price upon the spot, of the yarn manufactured, decrease.

How, and where, can teachers be procured in every village? the expence will be too great, where the number of the scholars is small; and where large, not only teachers will be wanting, but school rooms, which will add very considerably to the expence.

These, very probably, are the principal reasons that may be alledged against this institution; as these appear at first sight sufficient to raise a doubt in the minds of those, whose encouragement would be necessary, not only in word but deed; whose good report of the measure is not the only act required in its favour, but whose activity and supervision are wanted, after their liberality has been experienced by a public subscription; it is therefore proper not to rely on the effect of panegyric only; but to obviate these objections, which may appear to some of considerable importance.

With respect to the first objection, it shall be answered; that a vicious or bad practice should be abolished, and that the universality of it ought by no means to be produced as an argument in its favour, but as a proof to the contrary;



contrary; if an individual parish loses ten pounds a year, because the overseers do not provide a stock for the poor to work up, as by the statute of Elizabeth it is their duty to do, such conduct of the officers is blameable and detrimental to that parish; and it will not become less so if a similar conduct prevails in twenty thousand parishes; but, on the contrary, the loss will be co-extensive with the universality of the neglect, and the bad effect of such conduct will prove itself by the sum total of the loss.

Now let us reverse the object, and suppose an opposite cause producing an effect diametrically opposite; if ten pounds per annum would be the gains of a single parish, from the employment of children, two hundred thousand pounds would be the profit, if the practice were universal.

But let us see the good consequence in the light of habit only; and let us consider youthful industry as being calculated, by raising an industrious generation; to increase the wealth of the kingdom; which must bear a proportion with the work done within it; we will take it for granted, that this fifteen thousand

pounds, which has been returned to the committee of the House of Commons, as the sum expended in providing materials and utensils for setting the poor to work, throughout England and Wales; could have been only sufficient to provide work for the impotent and aged poor, and a few children in the work-houses; what would by this time have been the happy effect throughout the kingdom, if twenty times that sum had been employed in teaching and setting to work all the children of the poor, through the three years, when this average was taken; even if no profit had arisen from the work itself?

Those happy effects are beyond our calculation; we can only have a faint notion of them, by forming an idea of the reverse of their present miserable situation; by placing before our eyes the happy prospect an industrious generation forms, when placed in contrast with an idle race of people; we should see cleanliness instead of filth, cloathing instead of nakedness, comfort and content, instead of misery and dissatisfaction.

This advantage is not precarious, but certain, independent of immediate profit from  
the

the materials worked up; supposing no market for their yarn, no sale for their stockings; even supposing the loss of materials and of time certain; the habit of industry obtained, alone would be worth ten times the amount of the whole expence.

But there is no reason to suppose the produce of youthful ingenuity unsaleable, or unprofitable: has it been so in Lincolnshire? If not, why must it be so in Suffolk, in Essex, or in any other county? That yarn, which is fit for market, may have a longer carriage upon it, if no sale can be found at home, it is true; it certainly is farther from Suffolk and Essex to Yorkshire, than from Lincolnshire; but why must the schools of industry in these counties be employed only in spinning of Jersey? Why could not they be employed about such yarn as would find a market with the neighbouring manufacturers? If it be answered, that the neighbouring manufacturers do not keep the *parents* in constant work, and consequently the *children's yarn* would not find a sale; the difficulty is easily removed; let it be proposed to increase the consumption of coarse woollen cloths, by cloathing our nu-



merous poor in warm and comfortable apparel, manufactured by their own children. We are constrained, by act of Parliament, for the encouragement of the woollen manufacture, to bury people, of all ranks and conditions, in a shroud made of sheep's wool only. Why should not our poor (all those who are in such a situation of life as to be relieved by the poor's rate) be cloathed by the manufactory arising from the ingenuity and industry of their children? this would be a real encouragement of youthful industry. The obligation, when once become the law of the land, would, it is believed, by general consent, become the practice: and this, at least, is certain, that the poor would experience the comforts of such cloathing; they would experience also, other great benefits, arising from the habit of industry, imbibed by their young family.

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## L E T T E R XXXVII.

WITH respect to the impropriety of employing any part of the poor's rates, in  
a plan,

a plan, the success of which may be doubtful, and of collecting, from the pockets of the benevolent and charitable, a kind of additional poor's rate ; the answer is obvious—the benevolent and charitable may be disappointed, if the plan should not be successful, but will receive an equivalent for their money subscribed, in their intention to do good ; and if the plan succeeds, the good effect itself will insure a cheerful continuance of their subscription ; in the mean time, a portion of the poor's rate will be applied according to the spirit, as well as the letter of the law : and, should it fail of the success expected, one truth will be established—a melancholy one indeed, but such as we ought not to be ignorant of, if it be a truth,—that youthful industry cannot be made productive of advantage to society, except in the habit itself ; which will not leave them in maturer life, when it *will be of service* ; and in that case, we have gained the habit of industry, in return for the expence.

But the employment being confined to spinning and knitting, has been stated as an objection ; let us suppose these to be the sole employments ; although, if the plan succeeds,

and their work is profitable, other handicrafts might be introduced; the objection may be answered in the words of that gentleman\* to whom the county of Lincoln has been so much obliged for these institutions.

“ Now I would ask, which parishes will hereafter stock the country with the most laborious, honest, and intelligent servants or labourers? Will they be those, where children, until they become thirteen or fourteen years old, *at least*, continue to be nurtured in idleness (whether at the public expence or that of their parents); where they see nothing but patterns of dissoluteness and immorality; hear nothing but oaths, blasphemies, and slander; learn nothing but to plunder hen-roosts, orchards, and hedges; and for these and similar purposes, keep the most irregular hours, and are accustomed to prowl about at night, like so many beasts of prey? It is said, *the children under the care recommended above, will, at thirteen or fourteen years of age, know nothing*

\* See an Account of the Society for the Promotion of Industry in Lincolnshire, by the Rev. R. G. Bower, one of his Majesty's justices of the peace for the county of Lincoln.

*but*



*but spinning.* Yes; they will know much more: unless regularity of hours, decency of behaviour, a habit of persevering industry, and a sense of duty to God and man, with the means of perpetuating it, are nothing. But will such objectors lay their hands on their hearts and say, that *one* in *twenty* of the pauper's children, at present, when thirteen or fourteen years old, knows *any thing at all*, unless it be some of the wicked accomplishments above alluded to: if they do *not*, it is mere cavilling, and not worth a serious answer, to say, that we must not teach them what we propose,—only because it is not, perhaps, in our power to teach them more; at least, not without such funds as we can have no reason to expect. Would not, then, any considerate man, about to hire a lad or a girl, of the age above-mentioned, give a decided preference to those who shall have been educated in a parish, where, in conformity to the plans of our society, children from five or six years of age are assembled under the same roof, at an early and regular hour of the morning, kept steadily to the pursuit of business—taught that, even so early in life,

life, they are *able to maintain themselves*—made to take a pride in nothing but what they obtain by merit; and to dispute about no other object, than who, by being forwardest in the performance of duty, shall be entitled to the highest of those rewards, which the liberality of the society of industry shall, from time to time, hold up to their view?

“ Can it be supposed, that such an education will make no difference, either in the morality of the country, or the incumbrance of parishes? Will all this care and trouble be thrown away upon them? Will they remember none of the good lessons they have heard and will hear? Will they at once cast off all the regularity they shall have been inured to, during those six or seven years of human life, wherein habits, either good or bad, are easiest planted, and take the deepest root? Will they be as much inclined to picking and stealing, as if they had never tasted the sweet produce of honest labour? Will they, exclusive of principle, be as *dextrous* in the trade of iniquity, as if they had never been exercised at any other? Will they, when decorated with the honourable marks of our society’s approbation,

bation, care as little about *their character thus established*, as those who never knew how great a treasure a good name is? Lastly; will they easily be induced to raise a clamorous tongue, or extend an idle hand for parish relief, at thirty or forty years of age, when they were taught to scorn it at nine or ten."

As to the want of activity in the employment, if the knitting pin is to be handled, or the spinning-wheel is to be turned, the observation is futile; the chief time of girls and boys, in all schools, is passed in a sedentary posture; but they have their hours of relaxation, during which they unbend their minds, and train, by youthful sports, the body to healthy exercises; have not all our large schools produced excellent soldiers and sailors; where can we, with reason, expect our commanders by sea and land to be educated, if not in those seminaries; where the improvement of the mind confines them many hours in the day to a sedentary posture, pleasurably exchanged in the hours of relaxation, for the native and vigorous sports of youth?

Say,



Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen  
Full many a sprightly race,  
Disporting on thy margent green,  
The paths of pleasure trace.

But allowing it to be expedient that the rising generation of the poor ought to be brought up in more active employments than the knitting needle, or the wheel only; might they not intermix the labours of the field with the employments of manufacture? If stones are to be picked for the surveyor, wheat to be drilled, pulse to be hoed, corn to be weeded, grafs to be made into hay, wheat to be reaped, and all other various employments of husbandry to be learned; could not the superintendant of the schools go with his pupils into the fields, and see that they do their work properly; very little instruction would be necessary; the only object would be to keep up the habit of industry, which might be effected with as much ease in a field, as in a room.

With respect to the difficulty of finding teachers for every village, and a salary to pay them; it is apprehended that any village producing twenty male and female scholars, will  
find

find it the best œconomy to pay a person such a salary as will be worth the acceptance, to keep these young people in habits of industry, and to instruct them in the use of those very common instruments, the knitting pin and the wheel, the farmer who employs them, will find it worth his while that they should not remain ignorant of the mode of performing operations in agriculture, when they can be of service in that line.

Where the number of scholars is small, one school-room would be sufficient ; which might be easily found in any village ; and where the number is large ; it is better to have different rooms than to crowd many in one, both in regard to health and to convenience ; the same teacher could superintend two rooms half a mile from each other, with equal, if not greater convenience, than if the whole number of scholars were in one.

It would be premature to offer at this time any specific plan for the establishment of these schools, either throughout the kingdom at large, or in that small proportion of it, to which these letters are more particularly addressed ; it may nevertheless be proper to ob-  
serve,

serve, that Mr. Locke's theory, united with the experiments already made in the county of Lincoln, would together form a good outline; which might be filled up according to the disposition and situation of the inhabitants in any village or town, which might chuse to make the experiment; and in which the local convenience of the particular places might be consulted and attended to.

In an excursion which I made into Lincolnshire, in the summer 1787, to view the state of agriculture in that county; and also to inspect the regulation, and to be able to form some idea of the use of these institutions; some notes of which journey are in the eighth volume of the Annals of Agriculture; I became acquainted with a gentleman who took an active part as a trustee in the direction of them; and wishing to introduce a similar institution in Suffolk, I wrote to him requesting some information as to some particular points which were stated to him; I cannot conceive this gentleman will be offended with me for making public so much of his answer as respected this subject of our correspondence; it reflecting much credit on himself for the  
obliging



obliging and instructive manner in which he gives his information ; a copy of that part of his letter shall therefore be subjoined, as it will point out the means the gentlemen in the southern district of the parts of Lindsay, where these schools were first established, took to insure success in their attempt.

DEAR SIR,

Dec. 8, 1787.

—————“ It was entirely through the recommendation of the quarter sessions, held at Louth, that the poor were set to spinning through this part of the county of Lincoln ; and by the great assiduity, &c. of our worthy magistrate, Mr. Bowyer, the plan has been carried so very far into execution ; the materials were at first procured by the overseers of the poor of each parish, and the wheels and reels, &c. bought by them, at the parish's expence, and as soon as the children can spin tolerably well, the wool-comber delivers out the wool to the spinners, and pays them for the spinning per pound, and overhanks ; and the children earn soon from 18d. to 3s. per week, from seven years old.

“ The

“ The children in schools were, and are taught by a woman procured for that purpose, at the expence of the parish at first, but are afterwards paid out of the earnings of the children so taught, in proportion to their earnings ; and deductions are also made for fire and candle.

“ Before any school-rooms were built, the children were taught in some convenient room in each parish, or in some old uninhabited house, as best suited ; the school-hours are generally from six in the morning in summer till six or seven in the evening, and in winter from seven in the morning till seven or eight at night.

“ No school rooms have been built so large as to contain a hundred children ; nor do we think it would be eligible to have them so large as to contain so many ; but on the contrary, we think the best size are those which will *properly* hold about twenty wheels, or fewer according to the children in each parish ; and where there are a great number of children, *I think* different schools should be erected in such parts of the parish as may best suit the convenience of the children coming to,

to, and going from school; which schools may be built of flight and cheap materials; but *that* as parishes choose; for some have been made for the purpose *also* of the teachers residing in; a school for twenty should be 36 feet long by 15 or 16 feet wide, with windows on *both* sides as may be best for light; and for warmth, we use stoves generally, which are not expensive at *the first*, and save a great deal in coals, &c.

“ The teachers are *always* such as can teach the children to read, one hour *at the least* each day, and take good care of their morals; and also instruct them how to behave themselves to *all sorts* of people, as far as in their power.

“ Where Sunday-schools are already established, the children are attended *generally* by the teacher, and others appointed.”

Such an institution would, wherever it is carried into effect, tend to every desirable consequence; as well with respect to the pecuniary interests of the occupiers in the place, by diminishing the poor's rates; as to the comfort of the poor themselves, by introducing among their children regular habits of industry and orderly behaviour; and would consequently



tend to the happiness of those also, who, although elevated above the apprehension of poverty, are not above the feelings of humanity; and therefore must lament those distresses of their neighbours, which they cannot help seeing, and are not able to remove. Next to the desire of possessing a competency ourselves, it is a natural wish, that all those with whom we are connected by any intercourse of vicinity or employment, should also betray no signs of misery or distress, arising from poverty. The visions of the philosopher or poet, who fancies happiness lies in rural independence, can never be realized in situations where much is seen, heard, or felt, of his neighbour's misery; nor can a well-disposed mind taste *the sweet oblivion of the cares of life*, while in the midst of scenes of distress.

Some men of taste have supposed, that in a landscape, the pleasing effect upon the mind, of smoke arising from the chimney of a neat cottage, flows from a selfish comparison of one's own situation with that of the cottager—it is pleasant *procul alterius spectare laborem*,—but they must excuse me if I differ with them in opinion; it is a matter of feeling only,—the  
cottage

cottage smoke awakens an idea of comfort; the imagination rushes to the chimney corner, and sees honest labour recompensed by its proper rewards; and the pleasure which is then tasted is of a purer nature; it is pleasant *propé alterius spectare solamen*:—but if the hideous appearance of misery and distress, arising from chilling poverty, mixes with the idea, every pleasing effect is instantly changed to its opposite; and we turn with anguish from those objects, which recal to the mind, scenes of misery we are not able to relieve.

Those who are advocates for, or patrons of, Sunday-schools, would be more certain of their good effect, and the cause of religion and morality would receive a greater advantage from their very laudable endeavours, were the foundation of those schools to be laid in schools of industry; a superstructure of religious sentiment would be substantially built on the solid foundation of habitual industry. A poor man *cannot be religious who is not industrious*; because, having no property himself, he cannot honestly command the comforts, or even the necessaries of life, but by industry; every church-going habit in that class of society,

not accompanied by habitual industry is hypocritical ; because honesty cannot be the moral sentiment, which influences the habit.

That the poor should be instructed in their duties of religion is certainly necessary ; but we should remember that those are divided into two heads, our duty towards God, and towards our neighbour ; the one cannot be discharged without the other ; that industry, which is a necessary duty towards your neighbour, is equally necessary to render your religious duties towards God acceptable.

But the art of writing is not necessary to a performance of the duties of the poor, either towards God or towards their neighbour, and it may lead towards a breach of their duty towards *both* ; there must be in society hewers of wood and drawers of water ; if all are good penmen, where are those to be found who will contentedly perform the laborious offices of society, and live through a life of toil ? If honesty be not a fixed principle of the mind, the acquisition of writing may offer a temptation that will lead to ruin.

Reading may be considered nearly in the same point of light ; if we could confine the  
poor



poor boy to reading his Prayer Book and his Testament only ; nothing but good would arise from teaching poor children to read ; but the art being acquired, can we be sure whither the use of it may lead ? To prognosticate ; let us only recollect what books ourselves, when boys, would read with the greatest avidity ; and, before we have reason to deplore the consequence of bringing the poor up, in such a manner, as may make them less satisfied with their humble and laborious station in life ; let us, in idea, anticipate the probable misuse of these qualifications, and, by a kind of prophetic foresight, be certain of the effect, before we, by encouragement, foster the cause.

While these doubts are thrown out, with respect to the expediency of so much of the institution of Sunday schools, as respects the teaching *all* the children of the poor to read and write ; an implicit confidence in the good intention of the patrons of them should be explicitly declared, coupled with this suggestion ; that probably the only proper foundation of a Sunday school, is upon a school of daily industry.

So thought the patrons of the schools in Lincolnshire, and such has been their practice; the respectable magistrate, to whom that county has been, and it is hoped all England will be obliged, for his excellent exemplification of the experiment, as well as for his perspicuous and well written recommendation of the institution, and the detail of its success in that county; has finished the plan in a most complete manner, by a Sunday school; and, in so doing, has set us a noble example of training youth in the habit of industry the six days, and in the duties of religion the seventh.

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## L E T T E R   XXXVIII.

**I** HAVE, in pursuance of my plan, now sent you a few pages on alehouses and their customers; tracing the rise and progress of the baneful and seducing habit of drinking strong liquors, from the earliest days in this island, to the present æra; when the revenue receives  
above

above five millions annually from the inhabitants of the southern part of Great Britain, by their indulging themselves in this practice.

Julius Cæsar, in describing the manners and customs of the inhabitants of England, at the time of his invasion, about 77 years before the Christian epoch, says, that those were the most civilized who inhabited Kent, and that they differed but little from the Gauls; that those who lived in the interior parts, sowed but little corn, and lived on milk and flesh.

In describing the inhabitants of Gaul, he says nearly the same of them, “ *Agriculturæ non student; majorque pars victus eorum in lacte et caseo et carne consistit.*

Solinus, who wrote about eighty years after the birth of Christ, says, that the Britons, drank a fermented liquor, made of barley, unknown in former ages, or in any other country in Europe.

Tacitus, who wrote about thirty years afterwards, speaks strongly of the drunken habits of the Germans, near neighbours to the Gauls; “ *Diem noctemque continuare potando, nulli probum;*” he also says, that they made use of a liquor from barley or wheat, fermented.



We must conceive, that Cæsar was either a very superficial observer of the habits of those people, into whose country he carried fire and sword; or, that in a few years, habits destructive of their health and morals, were introduced among them by their conquerors, and had struck such a root, as to have very soon become a national vice.

The attachment of savages to strong liquors is a well known fact; the excess in which they indulge themselves with ardent spirits, whenever they can get at them, and the inveteracy of the habit, when once indulged in, almost tend to prove, analogically, that fermented liquors were not known, in Gaul and Britain, in the days of Cæsar, although, about an hundred years afterwards, the drinking them to excess was become a confirmed habit to the Germans, when Tacitus wrote his terse and elegant dissertation on their manners.

In the first century of the Christian æra, the Britons used a fermented liquor from barley; in the latter end of the 18th century, the public revenue arising from the duties on liquors, principally made from barley, and most  
in

in use with the common people, exceed five millions sterling a year.

The habit is become of too strong a growth, is too general, and too inveterate to be eradicated; and were it not, the financier of the day would discourage the attempt; he would tell us, we should act as unskilful gardeners, plucking up valuable plants with the weeds; if drunkenness disappeared from the land, a considerable part of five millions sterling would disappear from the coffers of the exchequer; and in proportion as we restrain the habit, we diminish the revenue arising from it.

But however impolitic the eradication of drunkenness may be, when seen in the light of revenue, were it possible to effect it; there can no harm arise, either to our finances or our morals, in tracing, as well as the very few lights, which can be found on this subject, will permit us, the habit of English drunkenness, from its infancy to its maturity; it will be the history of alehouses; will be found to grow with their growth, and to increase with their number; and it is possible that, in the progress of the investigation, one great and operative cause of the expence in maintaining  
our

our poor, and the miserable poverty they sustain, may appear too plainly to be mistaken; and having found out the cause of a disease, he is a timid physician who does not prescribe the remedy.

A fermented liquor from barley was the first intoxicating drink we read of in use among the Britons; but probably hydromel, or honey, mixed with water and fermented, was nearly a contemporary indulgence; when the aborigines of the island, to avoid the tyranny of the Romans, withdrew to their mountains and *morasses*, we find that they carried with them the knowledge and use of the one, if not of the other; the first they called *cwrw*, which is the Welch name for ale at present.

The vice of drunkenness does not seem to have been general until the Danes and Saxons came among us; and they brought not only the vice, but also the names of the liquors which were in most general use among them, mead and ale, and which have preserved the same appellations to the present times.

Mr. Strutt, in his history of the ancient Britons and Saxons, tells us, that intemperance in drinking was a prevailing vice, both among  
the



the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, with people of all ranks, in which they often spent whole days and nights without intermission; all meetings, public and private, terminated in rioting and excessive drinking, not excepting religious festivals; at which times it was usual for them to drink large draughts, in honour of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Twelve Apostles, and other venerated saints. In the reign of Edgar the Peaceable, the vice of immoderate drinking prevailed so greatly, that laws were thought necessary to reform it; and that Prince, to prevent quarrels that arose in public houses, from any one's drinking more than his share, which it seems was very frequent; caused certain pegs or knobs to be put, at proper distances, into each drinking cup; and no man was to drink beyond those knobs at one draught, under a severe penalty; which was also to be inflicted upon those who would compel others to drink beyond them; he quotes William of Malmisbury, and Bartholinus, as his authorities,

But it cannot be supposed, that by the expression *public houses*; similar places of entertainment to those which now bear that general appellation,

appellation, can be intended; because we find, that above a century after the conclusion of the Saxon monarchy, by the death of Edward the Confessor; public houses were not known, even in the metropolis: Fitzstephen's Description of the City of London, which is supposed to be written in 1174, mentioning the custom of selling wines by retail, in *shops* and *vaults*; and that there was only one public eating-house, or cook-shop:—" *Præterea est in Lundonia super ripam fluminis, inter vina in navibus et cellariis venalia, publica Coquina.*"

About ninety-two years afterwards, appears the first instance of the attention of the legislature to our favourite beverage, ale; in a statute passed in the 51st year of the reign of Henry the Third, called *Affisa panis et Cerevisæ*. As much of the statute as relates to *cerevisæ*, or ale, follows in these words:

"When a quarter of wheat is sold for three shillings, or three shillings and fourpence, and a quarter of barley for twenty-pence, or two shillings, and a quarter of oats for sixteen-pence, then brewers in cities ought, and may well afford to sell two gallons of beer, or ale, for a penny; and out of cities, to sell three

or

or four gallons for a penny. And when in a town, three gallons is sold for a penny, out of a town, they ought, and may, sell four; and this assize ought to be holden throughout all England."

But by statute, the sixth of the same year, called the Statute of the Pillorie and Tumbril, it is enacted,—“ That when a quarter of barley is sold for two shillings, then four quarts of ale shall be sold for a penny; when for two-and-sixpence, then seven quarts for two-pence; when for three shillings, then three quarts for one penny; when for three-and-sixpence, then five quarts for two-pence; when it is sold for four shillings, then two quarts at one penny; and so, from henceforth, the prices shall increase and decrease after the rate of sixpence.”

Mr. Barrington, in his notes on these statutes, seems to be of opinion, that women, at this time, principally carried on this trade; and corroborates that opinion, by the term *brachiatrix* being used; and also, on the authority of Harrison, who, in his description of Britain in Queen Elizabeth's reign, speaks of *ale-wives* using deceits in brewing; and also, because



because it is still said in Wales; that no one hath reason to expect good ale, unless he lies with his brewer.

Although the statute proportions the price of ale, by measure, to the price of barley, it does not proportion the quantity of barley to the measure of ale; we must therefore suppose the quantity of barley used to a certain quantity of ale to be fixed, although we do not know, with certainty, what it was.

The first statute regulates the price of ale, by the prices of wheat, barley, and oats; we have therefore reason to imagine, that they were used indifferently, or perhaps, altogether in the composition of ale: and it appears, that in those days, not only wheat and barley, but also honey, was made use of for this purpose; the sheriff of Hampshire being allowed, in his accounts, at the Exchequer, twenty-six shillings and ten-pence, for *wheat, barley, and honey*, to make ale for the Duke of Saxony, in the 31st year of the reign of Henry the Second\*.

\* Madox Hist. Excheq. vol. i. p. 369.

## L E T T E R XXXIX.

**D**URING a period of several centuries, before the excesses of the people were made use of for the purpose of raising a revenue, it is no easy matter to find any anecdotes of alehouses, or their patrons, the intemperate. If drunkenness must ever remain one of the incorrigible vices of society, it is but fair that the purse of the drunkard should be drained its full proportion; for the general preservation of order and decorum; and that those who will not, by good example, add any thing to the general flock of morality, should pay for the preservation of order: it is, at the least, striking some sparks of good from a great mass of evil.

But while general history and the laws are silent on the subject, some few lights are thrown upon it by Fleetwood, in his *Chronicon*.

The first instance is in 1302, when malt ground, was three shillings and four-pence a quarter, wheat sold at the same time for four shillings a quarter.

In

In 1309, at a feast given by Ralph de Born, prior of St. Austin's, in Canterbury, on his installation day, malt was six shillings a quarter; at the same feast, wheat cost seven shillings and two-pence a quarter.

In 1315 and 1316, malt was thirteen shillings and four-pence a quarter; wheat at the same time was twenty shillings. And, by the rains in harvest, wheat came to thirty and forty shillings a quarter, and good ale to two-pence a gallon; the better sort to three-pence; the best of all to four-pence: on this a proclamation was issued, that a gallon of ale should be sold at a penny; and that no wheat should be malted (*imbrasiatum*), which the Londonners had usually done, to the great consumption of corn; and sold it (*i. e.* ale made of it) at three-halfpence a gallon; the viler ale at a penny.

In 1339, wheat and malt bore the same price, nine shillings a quarter.

In 1423, malt was five shillings a quarter, wheat eight shillings.

In 1425, ale was from a penny to three-halfpence a gallon.

In



In 1440, malt was thirteen shillings a quarter, wheat twenty-four shillings.

In 1444, malt four shillings; wheat four shillings and four-pence a quarter.

In 1445, ale was one penny-halfpenny a gallon.

In 1451, ale was at the same price.

In 1453, ale one-penny-farthing a gallon.

In 1455, malt one shilling and five-pence a quarter; wheat one shilling and two-pence; ale one penny a gallon.

In 1457, wheat seven shillings and eight-pence a quarter, ale one penny a gallon.

In 1459, wheat five shillings a quarter, ale one penny a gallon.

In 1460, wheat eight shillings a quarter, ale one penny a gallon.

In 1504, wheat five shillings and eight-pence a quarter, ale about three-pence a gallon.

In 1551, wheat eight shilling a quarter, malt five shillings and a penny.

In 1553, wheat the same, malt five shillings a quarter.

In 1554, 1555, 1556, 1557, wheat and malt remained at the same price as in 1553;

but Mr. Stow says, that in 1557, before harvest, wheat rose in London to two pounds thirteen shillings and four-pence a quarter; malt to two pounds four shillings; and after harvest, wheat sunk to five shillings, malt to six shillings and eight-pence a quarter; while, in the country, wheat remained at four shillings a quarter, malt at four shillings and eight-pence.

In 1561, wheat, the quarter, eight shillings, malt five shillings.

From these notices, taken at unequal intervals, through the period of two centuries and a half; very few, if any, certain conclusions can be drawn, either with respect to the quantity of the materials, or of the materials themselves, of which ale was, in those days, composed; malt seems, in general, to bear a price somewhat proportional to the value of wheat; from which it also appears to have been sometimes made; but that proportion is so frequently broken through, especially in the year 1504 in the price of ale; that but little reliance can be placed on it.

The price of wheat and malt in 1557, in London, compared with its price in the country,

try, strikes one as a remarkable instance of a deficiency of police in regulating the supply of the metropolis by its consumption; for while the country enjoyed plenty; London experienced the advanced prices of a famine; the cause of which, the history of the times does not sufficiently explain.

No price of hops is mentioned in Fleetwood, although the use of them had become general, and there had passed already one act of parliament regulating the importation of them. Mr. Pennant, in his British Zoology, quotes a distich to prove, that carp and hops came into England the same year, viz. about 1514:

Turkies, carps, hops, pickerel, and beer,  
Came into England all in one year.

And then produces an extract from "The Boke of St. Alban's;" printed in 1496, to prove that carp was known here before: the regulations and establishment of the households of Henry Algernon Percy, the fifth Earl of Northumberland, at his castles of Wresill and Lekinfield, in Yorkshire, in 1512, will prove also; that hops were in general use before the year allotted for their introduction into Eng-



land by the distich; and will also shew the proportion of hops used to the malt

“ Hopps for brewinge; to make provision for five hundred and fifty-fix pounds of hopps for brewinge of beere, for the expences of my house for one whole yeere; after the estimation of thirteen shillings and four-pence the hundred.

“ Malte; to make provision for two hundred and nine quarters one bushel of malte, after four shillings the quarter by estimation.”

This is at the rate of about two pounds eleven ounces of hops to a quarter of malt; but some ale was brewed, in which the quantity of hops was much less than in beer; consequently the proportion of hops, to a quarter of malt in beer, might be more considerable.

These notices are inserted, rather as matters of curiosity; than as information, tending to throw much light on the progress of ale-houses, and their concomitant ebriety; however, they at least tend to shew, that neither the vice, nor the consumption of liquor, which it occasioned, had as yet been sufficiently attended to by the legislature, to occasion them, either to regulate the immorality,  
or

or to raise a revenue from licensing its continuation.

In the mean time, houses of entertainment increased in number, and also in licentiousness. In the fourteenth century, Chaucer, in his *Canterbury Tales*, makes us acquainted with a considerable inn, at which the palmers spent a night, in their pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas, at Canterbury:

“ In Southwerke at the Tabberd \* as I lay,

“ Redy to wendin on my pilgrimage

“ To Canterbury with devote corage,

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“ The chambers and the stables werin wide,

“ And well we werin esed at the best.”

His host was like a host of modern days,

“ Bold of his speeche, and wise, and well taught,

“ And of manhode lakkid him right naught :

“ And eke thereto he was a *mery* man.”

Shakspeare, who drew from nature, has also left us strong traits of character in his

\* *Tabberd*.—a jacket, or sleeveless coat, worn formerly by noblemen, in the wars, now only by heralds; it was the sign of an inn in Southwark; it is now the sign of the Talbot, *Urry's Glossary to Chaucer*.

Hostess of East Cheap; he, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, gives us several instances of the manners of inn-keepers towards the end of the fourteenth; the first and second parts of his King Henry the Fourth abound with them.

But we want not the instances; we stand not in need of the hint; we know that no man can be a vender of any commodity, who is not in his heart an encourager of the consumption of it.

Very early in the sixteenth century, in the nineteenth year of the reign of Henry the Seventh, the bad effects of the common sale of ale and beer were so sensibly felt as to occasion parliament to restrain the practice, and to authorise two justices of the peace to reject such alehouses, as they shall think proper; this appears to be the first instance of the interference of the legislature.

The next is about fifty years afterwards; in the reign of Edward the Sixth, the preamble to which has been already noticed in a former part of this tract; this first gives to two justices the power of licensing alehouses or tippling-houses, and directs them to take bond  
and



and recognizance of such as shall be admitted to keep them; as well against the using of unlawful games, as for the maintenance of good order; it punishes the venders of ale without licence (except in the time of fairs) by imprisonment, and recognifance with two sureties, not to offend in the same manner again.

After the lapse of another fifty years, parliament again, in the first year of the reign of James the First, found it necessary to interfere in the conduct of alehouses; the preamble to the act recites, with great propriety, their true use; "for the receipt, relief, and lodging of way-faring people, and for the supply of the wants of such people, as are not able to make their provision of victuals; and not for the entertainment of the idle to consume their money and time in a drunken manner."

This act not only punishes the alehouse-keeper; by a penalty of ten shillings to the poor; who suffers any person to remain tippling, "other than such as shall be invited by any traveller, and shall accompany him during his necessary abode there; and other than labouring and handicraftsmen in cities and towns

corporate, and market towns, upon the usual working days, for one hour at dinner time, to take their diet in an alehouse; and other than labourers and workmen, which for the following of their work by the day, or by the great, shall, for the time of continuing their work there, sojourn, lodge, or victual in any inn, alehouse, or other victualling-house;" but also inflicts a penalty of forty shillings, to be paid to the use of the poor, on the constables and church-wardens for neglect of duty, in not levying the penalty on the alehouse-keeper offending; and also regulates the price at which ale and beer shall be sold, viz. one full quart of the best ale or beer for a penny, and two quarts of the small; and if any alehouse-keeper sell less, he forfeits twenty shillings; the penalties to be levied by the constables or churchwardens.

In the 4th year of the same reign, parliament again was compelled to attend to alehouses;—"whereof," the preamble to the act says, "the multitudes and the abuses are become intolerable, and still do, and are likely to increase;" to prevent the evil, no person shall sell, utter, or deliver, any beer or ale, to  
any

any person not having a licence to sell ale or beer, except for the convenient use and expence of his household, under the penalty of six shillings and eight-pence for every barrel.

And by the next chapter, intituled, An Act for repressing the odious and loathsome Sin of Drunkenness; after making use of the following strong language as a preamble:

“Whereas the loathsome and odious sin of drunkenness is, of late, grown into common use within this realm, being the root and foundation of many other enormous sins, as bloodshed, stabbing, murder, swearing, fornication, adultery, and such like, to the great dishonour of God and of our nation,—the overthrow of many good arts and manual trades,—the disabling of divers workmen,—and the impoverishing of many good subjects, abusively wasting the good creatures of God;”

The act inflicts a penalty of five shillings on every person convicted of drunkenness, three shillings and four-pence on every person who shall remain drinking and tippling in any alehouse in the city, town, village, or hamlet, where he lives;—if any person shall be a second time convicted of drunkenness, he shall  
be



be bound, with two sureties, to the king, for his good behaviour, in the penalty of ten pounds.

And these offences shall be inquired of, and presented before justices of assize, justices of the peace in their quarter sessions, mayors, bailiffs, and other head officers of cities, towns, &c.—by all constables, churchwardens, head-boroughs, tithing-men, aleconners, and fidef-men; the penalties are to go to the poor of the parish. The act was farther enforced, and made perpetual, by the 1st of Car. I. cap. 4.

Three years afterwards, the attention of the legislature was again called forth, and any ale-house-keeper, being convicted of any offence committed against either of these two acts; intituled, An Act to restrain haunting and tippling in Inns, Alehouses, and other Victualling Houses; and the Act against the Sin of Drunkenness; shall be disabled from keeping an alehouse for three years following such conviction.

And by the 21st statute of this reign, chapter the seventh, the two last acts, which were at first only temporary, are made perpetual; and proof by one witness only is rendered necessary;

cessary; and that one witness may be a person who has voluntarily confessed that himself has been guilty of the offence; a kind of evidence, to which recourse ought never to be had, except in those instances of enormous crimes, where, for the safety of society, the conviction of an offender is necessary.

In the 1st year of Charles the First; foreigners, or persons not inhabiting in the towns or villages within which they shall be convicted of tippling in any alehouse, were made also liable to the penalty, which they were not liable to by the acts passed in the last parliament; and the alehouse-keepers who shall permit them to tipple, are also made liable to the same penalties as they were by former acts, with respect to the inhabitants; as are also vintners, keepers of taverns, and victuallers; and they are taken to be within the two former acts, and also within the statute then passed. Chapter 4.

By the statute, the 3d of Charles the First, chapter the fourth, reciting in the preamble, that the act made in the 5th year of Edward the Sixth, had not wrought such reformation as was intended, for that the fines were seldom  
levied,

levied, and many of the offenders are neither able to pay them, nor to bear their own charges of committing to gaol; therefore it is enacted, that he who keeps an alehouse without licence, shall forfeit twenty shillings; which the constables or churchwardens shall levy for the use of the poor; which if the party is not able to pay, he shall be whipped; and for the second offence, he shall be committed to the house of correction, for the space of one month, there to be dealt with as a disorderly person; and if he shall again offend, and be again convicted, he shall be committed to the house of correction, there to remain until discharged by order of the justices in their general sessions.

Throughout the reign of James, and in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First, the legislature appears to have taken every means, that penalties, imprisonment, and disgrace, could effect, to prevent the bad consequences arising from alehouses and drunkenness; in fact, the evil had been severely felt for several centuries, and had been attended to by government from the year 1503, to the date of the last mentioned act, 1627, but  
without



without effect; alehouses increased in number, and their frequenters in drunkenness, indolence, and licentiousness; and although the laws respecting them were severe, they were deficient; no proper means having been provided to compel their execution; and were then, as the last act states, what we at present find them to be—feldom or never put in force.

- > This seems to have been the last attempt of the legislature to regulate the moral conduct of alehouses, and to prevent the bad effects of ebriety; and these several acts of parliament still remain the law, although, unfortunately for the cause of morality and œconomy, not the practice.
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## L E T T E R XL.

AS yet the public revenue had not been considerably benefited by popular depravity; at least the money arising from the licensing alehouses had not enriched the coffers of the state, but had filled the pockets of those

those minions of the crown, who had sufficient interest at court to obtain the privilege of granting them; a remarkable instance of which occurred in the year 1621; when the House of Commons received many petitions against some grants which the king had made to certain individuals, of the power of licensing inns and alehouses; and which he declared, in his speech in the House of Lords, it was his intention to recal, having, till then, been ignorant of the ill effects which such patents had occasioned.

Soon after the restoration of Charles the Second, in the year 1660, parliament granted, among other profits arising from articles of excise, those on beer, ale, mead, cyder, perry, and foreign spirits, in augmentation of the royal revenue.

In the 9th of Queen Anne, a duty of four shillings was laid on any piece of vellum, parchment, or paper, on which shall be engrossed a licence for retailing of wine; and one shilling on a similar licence for retailing of beer and ale, or other exciseable liquors.

And, by the 6th of George the First, all persons whose office it shall be to take any recogni-

cognizances, on account of ale licences, shall be obliged to make out such ale licences on paper duly stamped, before they take the recognizances, under the penalty of ten pounds.

In the beginning of the next reign, parliament took into consideration the inconvenience which had arisen from persons being licensed to keep inns and common alehouses by justices of the peace; who, living remote from the places of abode of such persons, might not be truly informed of the want of such inns and alehouses, or of the characters of persons applying for licences; and therefore enacted, by statute 2d, chapter 28, and section 11, "That no licence shall be granted but at a general meeting of the justices, acting in the division where the persons applying for licences dwell, on the 21st of September, or twenty days after, or at any other general meeting of the said justices, to be holden for the division wherein the said person resides; and that all licences granted otherwise shall be void."

And, by the 26th of George the Second, chapter 31st, the above-mentioned clause is repealed; and the manner of licensing alehouses in that part of Great Britain, called  
England,



England, is regulated; and it is ordered, “that no licence to keep any alehouse, &c. shall be granted to any person not licensed the year preceding, unless such person shall produce, at the general meeting of the justices in September, a certificate under the hands of the parson, vicar, or curate, and the major part of the churchwardens and overseers, or else of three or four reputable and substantial householders and inhabitants of the parish, or place, where such alehouse is to be, setting forth that such person is of good fame, and sober life and conversation; and it shall be mentioned, in such licence, that such certificate was produced, otherwise the licence shall be void.”

It remains to be observed, that to prevent any licence from being obtained on motives of interest, in the magistrates, by their being concerned in habits of trade with the person licensed; no justice of the peace, being a brewer, innkeeper, or distiller, or a seller of, or dealer in ale or spirituous liquors, or interested in any of the said trades, or being a malster or victualler, shall be capable of granting licences to sell ale or beer, by virtue of

an

an act of parliament passed in the same year.

By this long category, of pains, penalties, and restrictions, has the legislature attempted, through the lapse of near three centuries, to prevent the ill effects of alehouses, on the morals, the industry, and the œconomy of the people, but they have attempted it in vain; and the government not having been able to preserve our poor in habits of sobriety, has determined that the revenue should feel the good effects of public vice; and therefore, by a variety of taxes on these commodities, the consumption of which is so general; and which taxes having increased nearly *pari passu*, with the stamp duties on the ale licences; (viz. from one shilling, in the reign of Queen Ann, to one-and-thirty shillings and six-pence, in the 24th year of the present reign, besides the duty on the house itself, if at a rent above fifteen pounds a year;) have raised from the public, in the four quarters of the year, ending the 10th of October, 1792, the vast sum of five millions two hundred and nineteen thousand seven hundred and fifty-one pounds, as may be seen by the following extract from

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a state-

a statement, presented to the House of Commons, pursuant to an act of the 27th year of his Majesty's reign\*.

*Net Produce of the Duties of Excise in England.*

On beer,	-	-	£.2,012,373
Hops,	-	-	82,776
Malt, perpetual duty,	-	-	612,235
Spirits, British,	-	-	644,104
Ditto, foreign,	-	-	704,392
Licences to retailers of spirituous			
liquors,	-	-	160,704
Duties comm <sup>d</sup> .	} Spirits	British,	111,307
5 Jan. 1791.		Foreign,	142,737
	Malt,		118,033
Annual malt, &c.	-	-	607,200
			<hr/>
			5,195,861
Customs on gin,	-	-	23,890
			<hr/>
			5,219,751

When it is considered, that none of that immense quantity of gin and malt spirits,

\* Annals of Agriculture, vol. xx. p. 400, 97.

which



which are smuggled into this country clear of all duties, and also none of the customs on foreign brandy, rum, and foreign wines, are taken into this account; which alone amount to upwards of seven hundred and fourteen thousand pounds; because these are liquors that we may suppose are drank exclusively by the people of property, and are not generally the beverage of the common people; and also, because we cannot, in such a general estimate, as is here attempted to be made; state accurately how great a proportion of these commodities, which are excised, is exported; we may, therefore, for an instant suppose; that the quantity exported; together with the consideration, that foreign wines, brandy, and rum, are not the general drink of the mass of the people; will leave the sum total, of the duties of excise, together with the customs on gin; amounting to 5,219,751l. a fair average annual tax, paid by the people of England for the liquor drank by eight millions five hundred thousand subjects, men, women, and children; this being allowed to be a probable average, where exactness cannot be pretended to; it will then appear, that each individual

pays to the revenue, for his beer, ale, spirits, and strong liquors ; exclusive of the customs on foreign wines, brandy, and rum; above twelve shillings and three-pence farthing annually.

It can scarcely be supposed, that the sum paid by the consumers, for these liquors, can be short of five times the tax which government has laid on them; although the absolute proof that it is so (were such a proof possible) would be too tedious an investigation for this cursory inquiry; but if either the article of ale, or of spirits be separately examined, with respect to its tax, and its retail price, it is imagined the proportion mentioned will be found to be far within the truth; we shall then perceive, that each individual expends above three pounds one shilling and four-pence farthing in that indulgence; which Adam Smith does not reckon among the necessities of life.

Now let us have recourse to Mr. Howlett's computation of the number of labouring poor individuals in England—six millions and a quarter—these forming that class of the people, for whom the poor's rates are raised; and it will be found that their expenditure in ale, beer,

beer, and spirituous liquors will considerably exceed nineteen millions.

Nor can this be deemed an extravagant computation; when it is remembered, that the consumption of wines, and also that consumption of brandy and rum, which may be calculated as attaching itself to the customs on those spirits; are, in this calculation, supposed to belong exclusively to the remainder of that population; which is calculated to amount, in the whole, to eight millions and a half; or to two millions and one quarter only of our fellow subjects; the six millions and one quarter of the labouring poor being deducted.

To compute the yearly earnings of the poor throughout England, is a matter infinitely above my ability; and to guess at them is taking a leap so much in the dark, as would be an imputation on the prudence of any man. Mr. King, in 1668, computed the income of labourers and out-servants at fifteen pounds a year, to a family consisting of three and a half persons; Chief Justice Hale, about the same time, computed the expences of a labourer's family, of six persons, at twenty-six pounds a year; supposing either of these com-



putations nearly right at that time; and supposing the price of wages to be now double; and the expences of a labourer's family, of the same number of persons, to be double; and more than that they cannot be; it will be found that the expences of the alehouse will consume no inconsiderable proportion of a labourer's wages; and bear a large proportion to the total of his expences.

Therefore, it must be apparent, that one great and leading source of the evil we complain of, in the state of the poor of this country, may be traced from hence; from the vast sums which are spent in these licensed places of ebriety; which are so many in number, that it is a matter of surprise how the keepers of them can get a livelihood; by honest and sober conduct they could not; but it must be by an improper solicitation for drunken customers; by giving them credit for liquor, and encouraging them in bad habits; it appearing that the number of ale, spirits and wine licences is to the number of inhabitants, nearly as one to ninety; therefore the profit on the expences of a number, much short of ninety people, for strong liquors, enables a man, not  
only

only to support himself, family, and servants' but also, in many instances, to acquire a fortune; for it should be mentioned, to the credit of our countrymen, that of ninety individuals, men, women, and children, probably half of them scarcely ever taste strong liquors, and are certainly no customers to alehouse-keepers.

The cause of a disease being known, it has been said, he must be either an ignorant or timid physician who knows not what remedy to prescribe, or knowing it, is fearful of applying it.

If time lost, and the money spent in the indulgence of drinking habits, be in any degree the cause of the distresses of the poor, and of the increase of the rate for their relief and maintenance; it is plain that, in proportion as the opportunity of indulging in these habits is diminished, the bad effects of them will disappear; and it is an experimental truth, that in proportion as you cease to indulge a habit, does the habit itself disappear.

It is true, a patient, whose constitution has been injured by drinking, may at first conceive he cannot exist without his usual indulgence; but what will his physician pre-

scribe? Probably not an immediate and total abstinence from strong liquors, but a gradual reduction of the quantity, and of the frequency of the indulgence; the patient, in the meantime, finds health return, his constitution is strengthened, and the bad habit is weakened; and in the end he perceives that health and sobriety are not incompatible.

In the same manner should the physicians of the state proceed with their patients, the people; not by encouraging the *means* of indulgence, and restraining the *practice* by pains and penalties; these we know, by the experience of some centuries, have no effect; it is like holding a rod and a cherry to a child; the one will be eat, and the other ought not, on such an occasion to be used; neither ought the pains and penalties, in the various statutes respecting ebriety, to be inflicted, until the temptation is farther removed; if a labouring man has but to step over his own threshold to the next door to indulge himself in drinking; it requires some philosophy, while he has either money or credit, to refrain; oblige him to go a considerable distance, and he will not so often yield to the temptation.

If



If parliament should order a *census* of the people to be taken, by an actual numeration of them, by the constables of each parish, who might return the number to the high constables, and they to the quarter sessions in each county, and by a similar method in cities ; the actual population of the kingdom might easily be known.

The number of ale, spirit, and wine licences might also be known from the excise-office.

Whatever be the proportion that the number of these licences bears to the amount of the population at present ; if that proportion should be decreased one-third by an experimental act of parliament for three years, the effect of such an experiment upon the morals of the people, the distresses of the poor, the poor's rates, and also upon the revenue, in respect to the produce of the duties of excise, would be known ; and if it was on the whole advantageous to the morals, to the poor, and the rate for their maintenance was diminished ; the experiment should be persisted in by a farther decrease of the proportion, between the number of people and the number of licences, for the next three years, and so on, until the point  
be

be found, beyond which the decrease would be prejudicial.

In such an experiment, undoubtedly the good effect proposed, would be opposed by a diminution of the revenue which arises from these articles of the excise; for it is plain, that the smaller the consumption of strong liquors, the less the revenue arising from that consumption; and the smaller the number of licences, the less the produce of that branch of the revenue; but if the end of government be the good of the governed, can this be an objection? Surely not, unless revenue is of more consequence to a state than the morals, the religion, the happiness of its subjects.

If the revenue should prove deficient, through the experiment, and it could not, unless the experiment succeeded, would it not gain by other and better means? If the quantity of national drunkenness, indolence, and expensiveness in the articles of liquors, was diminished, would not the quantity of national morality, industry, and œconomy, be increased? And, in such a case, would not agriculture and manufactures restore that defalcation to the revenue, occasioned by a suppression

pression of the habits of indulgence in drinking?

If a diminution of the number of alehouses had no effect upon the habits of our fellow subjects, but that the man who would frequent one at his door, would do the same at a mile distance,—still some good will arise from the experiment: being fewer houses, each house will have more custom, and will not be tempted to encourage the habit in their customers, by the risk of trusting them; an alehouse score does not increase in the simple ratio of the quantity drank, but in the compound proportion of the quantity drank, and the hazard incurred by giving credit.

Another advantage would accrue; the number being less, the conduct of those which remained might be better attended to, and the haunts of ebriety and dissoluteness might be brought more directly under the eye of the peace-officers; and, if the experiment was attended with a general revision of the statutes respecting them; the penalties might be put in a way of being levied without expecting neighbours, companions, or friends, to turn informers.

But



But the number of alehouses being diminished, and by that means the custom at the remaining houses being encreased, they could afford to pay more for their ale, wine, and spirit licences; and that not only in proportion to the decrease of the number, but because the additional custom they get will be free of house-rent and house-keeping; therefore if this regulation should not diminish the quantity of liquor consumed, it will increase the revenue; and if it should diminish the quantity consumed, it will proportionably increase the habits of sobriety, industry, and œconomy, which are better for the governed than revenue.

On the whole it appears to be a truth plainly proved, that the wretched situation of the poor, and the expences of their maintenance, are in a great degree increased by their habitual fondness of drinking, which induces laziness, want of œconomy, and that apathy or indifference to what may happen, which is the consequence of habits of ebriety, as it also is sometimes of excess of distress; it has also been proved, that from the time when alehouses were first licensed, the legislature has frequently

frequently complained of the bad effects to the morals and habits of the poor, from the encouragement these their favourite haunts, gave to drinking, and laziness ; and it also appears that the legislature has frequently interfered by penal statutes to prevent these consequences ; but without effect.

It therefore now becomes their wisdom to try some other means ; if the evil so long and so often complained of, not only still exists, but is encreasing ; and as the legislature of this country has for near three centuries, found by experience, that with respect to penalties, the acts of the state are become a dead letter, and the statutes of the realm are disregarded—that in the mean time, the number of licences, and the quantity of liquor consumed, are amazingly increased ; and the consequential habits among the lower class of people have occasioned their maintenance and relief to become a serious burthen to that class of his majesty's subjects, which is next in number, as well as importance to the state ;—a diminution of the number of houses licensed for the sale of liquors is therefore the experiment which should now be tried—an experiment  
which

which, if it should be somewhat injurious to the revenue *immediately*, will be *mediately* advantageous; and at all events beneficial to the community—and if the experiment should not be beneficial to the community, it cannot injure the revenue.

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## L E T T E R XLI.

THERE are very few human institutions, respecting the propriety of which, there do not exist two opinions; the good and the bad; the for and the against are so interwoven in all our schemes and plans that it is scarcely possible to find any existing establishment, in which while one man or set of men sees nothing but good; another will see nothing but evil; the fair conclusion to be drawn, is, that in all our plans, institutions and establishments, there exist both good and evil; but as we will suppose they are generally established with a view to good; that evil which does not naturally, and consequentially arise from them; but



but only proceeds from a misuse or misapplication; should not be estimated as necessarily inherent in the plan; the evil in this respect resembles gluttony and drunkenness; no one but will allow but that meat and drink are a necessary good, although the misuse of them produce those vices. In a former part of this tract, box clubs or friendly societies have been glanced at, and recommended, as tending to diminish the poor's rate; that they have that tendency, the very essence of their rules will prove; because their fund is created by a voluntary contribution among the members of the club while in health, to support each other by a weekly allowance when diseased or disabled by accidents or age; without which allowance the majority of the members, of most of them, would receive a weekly support from the parish rates. But it may be said they encourage drinking; for in general their meetings are held at a public house; and probably instances may be produced where individuals have returned from their monthly or quarterly meetings intoxicated; and it also may be hinted that their annual meeting, when they dine together, too frequently is a feast of intemperance;

rance; for my own part, I believe that all feasts are feasts of intemperance, both of the poor and the rich; but it should be added to the account, that at feasts in general every person is left at liberty to drink or not; at these societies, one of the first standing rules is against drunkenness; therefore that vice is neither the object of these clubs, nor of the members; and instances of it may be classed under the idea of misuse.

Another objection may, and has been made to them; viz. that they may be applied to bad, seditious, and turbulent purposes; it is allowed to be possible; and more especially in manufacturing towns; and there is no doubt but that instances of the kind have happened; that journeymen to different trades in populous cities and towns, may have combined against their masters; may have refused to work but at a certain price; that seditious, and treasonable toasts, may have been drank at these meetings; and that riot and disorder may have proceeded from the door of the public house they frequent, it should be recollected that these instances only prove, where they have existed, an abuse of these societies; and are  
by

by no means a natural consequence flowing from the right use of them.

But be that as it may; the particular purport of these sheets respects the labouring poor; the day labourer in husbandry, not the mechanick, the artizan, or the manufacturing poor, any farther than as they are involved in the general consideration of those who may become a burthen on society, for their maintenance; and these abuses of friendly societies, have not as yet been found prevalent, where this description of men constitute the majority of the club; the country village, or market town, whose inhabitants do not rise to opulence by manufactures; have not produced any other than good effects from friendly societies; among such bodies of men therefore they certainly tend to good, as far as their rules tend to good order, and the fund they voluntarily raise, tends to relieve them in cases of illness and distress; when otherwise the relief must proceed from the poor's rate.

And the legislature has acted from the same opinion; nay more; it has proceeded from an opinion of the *general* good they do to society throughout the kingdom, in all places and



under all considerations ; as well in the populous manufacturing towns as in the deserted villages ; the parliament has acted upon a general principle ; and applaud and encourage when the good is general, influenced by a sentiment similar to that of the candid Critic ;

*Verum ubi plura nitent . . . . . non ego paucis  
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit  
Aut humana parùm cavit natura.*

The act of parliament which passed in the last session, for the encouragement of friendly societies ; authorises me to assert that parliament approves of them generally, both by the preamble to the act, and by the solid and considerable encouragement given to them in the body of the act ; only subjecting their rules to the inspection, and approbation, of the Justices at their Quarter Sessions.

The preamble to this wise and humane act of parliament states that ; whereas the protection and encouragement of friendly societies in this kingdom for raising by voluntary subscription of the members thereof, separate funds for the mutual relief and maintenance of the said members, in sickness, old age, and infirmity, is likely to be attended with very  
beneficial

beneficial effects, by promoting the happiness of individuals, and at the same time diminishing the publick burthens; may it therefore please your Majesty that it may be enacted,

Sect. 1. That any number of persons may form themselves into a society, and raise among themselves a fund, for their mutual benefit, and make rules and impose fines, &c.

2 and 3. That such rules shall be exhibited to the justices in quarter sessions, who may annul or confirm them; and if confirmed, that they shall be signed by the clerk of the peace, and be deposited with him; and until their rules are so confirmed, no society shall be within the meaning of the act, and no confirmed rule shall be altered, but at a general meeting of the society, and the alteration shall be subject to the review of the quarter sessions.

5. Such society may appoint officers; and securities shall be given if required, the treasurers shall give bond to the clerk of the peace, and other officers to the treasurer; and the bonds shall not be chargeable with stamp duty.

Q 2

6. Com-

6. Committees may be appointed, whose powers, if standing committees, shall be declared in the rules of the society; and if particular ones, shall be entered in a book, and shall be controulable by the society.

7, 8, 9. The treasurers or trustees shall lay out the surplus of contributions, and bring the proceeds to account for the use of the society, shall render accounts and pay over balances; and in case of neglect, application may be made to the Court of Chancery, &c. and no fee shall be taken for such proceedings in any court.

10, 11. Executors shall pay money due to these societies before any other debts; and the effects of these societies shall be vested in the treasurers, or trustees, for the time being; who may bring and defend actions.

12. But the societies must declare the purpose of their establishment, before the confirmation of their rules, by the court of quarter sessions; and the uses to which the money subscribed shall be applied; and may inflict penalties for misapplication of money, and shall not be dissolved unless by the consent of five sixths



sixths of the then existing members, and of all persons receiving or entitled to receive relief from the society; and their stock shall not be devisable, but for the general purposes of the society.

13, 14. Their rules shall be entered in a book, and received in evidence, and they may receive donations of any persons out of the society, which shall be applied to the purposes of the society.

15, 16. Where any members think themselves aggrieved, they may apply on oath to two or more justices, near to the place where such society is established, who are empowered to act, and make such order therein, as they shall think fit; but if by the rules of any society any matter shall be left to arbitration, the award of the arbitrators shall be final.

S. 17, 18, 19, 20. No member of a society producing a certificate thereof, shall be removeable from the parish where such society is established, until he is actually chargeable to that parish; these certificates shall be proved by oath of one of the witnesses attesting them before a magistrate; and on complaint of parish officers, justices may summon persons bringing

certificates to be examined, and to make oath of their settlement; and copies of these examinations shall be given to the parties, which shall exempt them from future examination; and justices may declare, by an order in writing, the place of settlement of persons so examined, without issuing a warrant for their removal; and copies of such orders and of examinations shall be returned to the parish officers of the place of settlement.

S. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, Persons aggrieved by the adjudication of justices, may appeal to the quarter sessions, and no person residing in any parish under this act shall thereby gain a settlement, nor by paying of rates, nor any apprentice or servant to such person; but bastards shall have the same settlement as the mother who shall reside in any parish by virtue of this act.

S. 26. The charges of maintaining or removing residents, under this act, to be reimbursed by the parish to which the parties belong; the act to be deemed a publick act.

This act of parliament will probably be productive of more good to the nation in general than that enlightened and humane member

ber of parliament, from whom the bill originated, conceived; unless while he intended to raise a revenue from the poor in aid of the poor's rates, and for the support of themselves, he with the spirit of prophecy foretold, from the effect of this act, the gradual decline, and in the end, the downfall of that servile and expensive system, the law of settlements; no one act of the legislature respecting the poor since the first corner stone of the system, the 43d of Elizabeth, is so replete with good; it holds out to them every encouragement, and only restrains, as societies or clubs protected by the legislature ought to be restrained; from doing mischief to that very government which protects, encourages, and rewards them; the compliance with the requisition of exhibiting their rules to the justices at the quarter sessions, is easy and free of expence; the preservers of the peace of the county are at the same time the natural judges of what rules may be inimical to that peace; the encouragement is substantial; and the members of these clubs see it; for they crowd to have their rules recorded by the clerk of the peace; and the poor



in general know the advantages; for they are solicitous to become members of friendly societies.

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L E T T E R XLII.

**I**N the nineteenth volume of the Annals of Agriculture, are the rules of a friendly society, instituted under the patronage of several gentlemen whom the poor of a parish in Norfolk have the happiness to call their neighbours and friends, which rules appear to be very well adapted to the purposes of such friendly societies in general; more especially because the controul of them, is by these rules invested in the gentlemen of opulence in the place, together with the clergyman; and because the times of their meeting at a public house are restrained to the four quarters of the year, and two feasts, (possibly that might be better altered to one); instead of obliging the members to meet monthly; the only article in which

which these rules appear to be materially deficient is that the club does not in any form of words declare the purposes of its establishment, although they may certainly be collected from the general body of the rules ; a copy of these rules, and orders, shall be added ; as they may tend to assist any person into whose hands these pages may fall, in establishing a similar society, on a better principle, and with better regulations, than those usually drawn up for such occasions ; and the purpose of the society shall be properly declared according to the direction of the act of parliament ;

Rules and orders agreed upon to be observed by the members of a friendly society instituted the       day of       , in the year       for the purpose of raising by voluntary subscription of the members thereof, and other charitable persons who may be inclined to give contributions thereto, a fund for the mutual relief and maintenance of the said members in sickness, accidents, infirmity, and old age.

Art. 1. That no person, after the first quarter day after the establishment of this society, exceeding the age of forty-five years, nor any person having any apparent infirmity of mind  
or

or distemper of body shall ever be admitted a member.

2. That on the Saturday before the full moon preceding the four principal quarterly days of the year, shall be held the ordinary meeting, in the evening, from seven to nine in the summer; and from six to eight in the winter.

3. That no person shall ever be admitted a member but at one of the quarterly meetings, and by the majority of the trustees present, as well as by a majority of the other members.

4. That every member is to be present at the said quarterly meetings, and to pay fourpence towards the reckoning of that evening; or having some reasonable excuse which may be transmitted to the society by the clerk, and shall be admitted as such by the majority present, the clerk shall tender for each, fourpence, or, if the excuse be not deemed valid, then the member so absent shall pay one shilling; the said penalties to be put into the common stock.

5. That whoever desires to be admitted into this society, shall appear at one of the said quarterly meetings, and if then and there as

above



above approved of, he shall pay down one guinea (besides the fourpence to be spent) towards maintaining the common stock or fund; and thereby he shall become a full member: But if not then capable, to pay the whole, he must pay on each quarterly day besides the fourpence for expence, for the months immediately preceding, one shilling per month to the stock, and so to be continued for twenty-one weekly months and not to receive any benefit from the fund, till the whole twenty-one shillings is paid.

6. That there shall be two feasts in the year; the one on the quarterly meeting before Christmas, and the other on the Saturday before Whit-sunday; and in order to abridge the loss of time as much as possible, the dinners not to be ready before three o'clock, as by that time with a little management the day's work may be finished; for which feasts every member shall on admittance pay one shilling, and clear his club arrears if any be due, besides the payment of his wonted subscription, or be excluded; by which arrears is hereby explained to be meant, a regular payment of one shilling for every weekly month during the continuance

tinuance of this society to be put into the common box or fund.

7. And for the better regulating the affairs of this society, the following trustees are hereby appointed, viz.

or the heirs of the said gentlemen, as proprietors of their estates in the said parish, and the rector or vicar of the said parish, for the time being, upon condition that each of the said gentlemen, their heirs or successors, shall pay two guineas towards the common stock or box, as qualifying themselves for the trust hereby reposed in them.

8. That the majority of the said trustees, shall either personally act, or choose two stewards out of the members of the club to receive and pay all the money belonging to this society, taking receipts for whatever they pay; and if the said stewards or either of them shall be found guilty of any breach of trust in their office, or of fraudulently converting to any other use than that of the society, any sum or sums of money, or shall make any false or unjust account thereof, they the said stewards shall upon discovery be forthwith discharged of their office, and expelled the society; and the afore-said

said trustees shall be accountable for, and shall make good every embezzlement, or injury, the society may through the neglect or fault of themselves or their stewards have sustained; and the said trustees or their stewards, shall attend the society before the first half hour of each quarterly meeting is expired, or the stewards shall each forfeit one shilling to the box or common stock.

9. For the security of the cash, or other public stock of the society, there shall be prepared a convenient box with three locks, and three keys, each of different constructions from the other, and each of the stewards to have a key, and the master of the house where the box is kept shall be in possession of the third; and there shall always be kept by the clerk a regular cash-book, and the copy of each day's receipt or expence, to be locked up in the box, which is not to be opened, nor any money to be taken out, but at the said quarterly meetings; the money in the mean time wanted by the sick members, to be supplied by the trustees, or their stewards.

10. Every person become a full member of this society, if he falls sick, lame, or blind,

so



so as to become incapable of following his trade or employ, after seven days notice given to the stewards, and apothecary, or one of them, shall receive out of the box or common stock, if confined to his bed, a weekly allowance of five shillings and sixpence; but if able to go about not more than four shillings, till he shall be so far recovered as to follow his trade, or employ; provided that his sickness or lameness does not continue longer than one whole year; but if it does, then he shall receive two shillings and sixpence a week, for as long a time as he shall be afflicted; but if any such member shall recover before the seven days notice is expired, he will not be entitled to any weekly allowance.

11. In case the stewards shall have sickness, urgent business, or be otherwise disabled with reasonable cause, the trustees may appoint some other member (for whom likewise they are to be responsible), to officiate, or act in their stead.

12. Whereas an apothecary will be constantly employed for the service of this society, and is to be paid out of the common stock; and every other proper case recommended to the

the county hospital\* ; it is hereby further agreed that every member (the clerk excepted) shall pay sixpence at the first quarterly meeting after the accident happened, into the fund towards the paying the extraordinary expence that may occur upon any one of the members which may break a bone, leg, arm, &c. (except by drunkenness, wrestling, football playing, &c.) or for want of such payment be excluded ; and during the time any member receives money from the box, he shall be excluded all payments to the box, or house, except upon deaths, feasts, and broken bones.

13. Whenever any member dies all the members are to attend his funeral, and all (the clerk excepted, who is to give notice of the burial) shall contribute, at the first quarterly meeting after the funeral sixpence each towards defraying the expences of his funeral, &c. and every member who does not so attend, shall pay in the subsequent quarterly night one shilling into the box, or, in defect of either of those payments to be for the future excluded ; except the case of the small pox, when no attendance will be required.

\* If there is one in the county.

14. When-

14. Whenever any member dies there shall be allowed out of the box for his burial, one guinea and a half; and if he has a widow or children, to them two guineas.

15. And on the death of every full member's lawful wife; the husband, giving notice to the stewards, shall receive one guinea and a half from the box (if demanded), the said quarterly meeting night after her decease, towards paying the funeral charges; upon which occasion every member shall on the same night or whenever they appear pay three-pence towards it or be excluded.

16. The stewards shall each go once in seven days to visit each sick member, and shall be allowed for each visit at the next meeting six-pence, if no complaint shall be by the sick preferred against him, or them, at the next general meeting for want of proper attention and care; and the said stewards shall forfeit to the box one shilling, to be paid at the next meeting, for every time that he refuses to go; but if it be found that any member has brought upon himself sickness, distemper, infirmity, or inability to follow his trade or employment by debauchery,



debauchery, intercourse with lewd women, venereal taint, drunkenness, fighting, wrestling, or football playing; in such sort of cases he shall not have any weekly allowance from the society; or if any member counterfeits himself sick or infirm as thereby not able to follow his business or trade, and shall for a time by means of such imposition obtain and receive any weekly allowance or support, such member shall for the future be excluded from every benefit which might otherwise have accrued to him from the society: and when any member is so far recovered from his sickness or indisposition as to be able to follow his business he shall within three days give notice to one of the stewards or be for ever excluded; unless he pays to the box at the next general meeting one whole week's allowance; and if any member is known by any other member to work during the continuance of his allowance he shall be expelled, as also shall that other member who does not inform the society of it; and the sick or infirm are to be regularly paid by the trustees or their stewards.

17. And that every thing may at all times be transacted with regularity, decency and de-

corum in this society, no member or members shall have any drink of any kind to themselves separately from the rest of the society; nor shall any liquors be admitted into the room where the society meets during the time of their sitting, but what is ordered in by the stewards; and when the appointed and limited hours for the sitting of this society are expired, one of the stewards shall give notice thereof and every one of the members shall depart the room in a civil and peaceable manner, and it shall accordingly be cleared by one of the stewards before he departs the room: and if any member during the time of the society's sitting *shall speak irreverently of the Almighty, disrespectfully of his majesty or his government, or shall lay wagers, or curse, swear, blaspheme, talk obscenely, use taunting, reviling, or abusive language, or apparently seeks to quarrel with any of the members*, he shall submit to a fine, to be put into the common stock, such as the majority of the society shall think fit to impose, according to the nature and circumstances of the offence, so that it does not exceed two shillings, nor be less than sixpence.

18. And if any member after any meeting of this society, shall speak ill of, or cast any reflections on any member or members of the society on or for what has been said or agreed to by the society, he shall forfeit five shillings to the common stock, or be excluded.

19. No part of the common stock of this society to be lent out, but upon lawful interest, government security, and with the consent of the majority assembled, at one of their quarterly meetings.

20. If the wife of any of the members come into the society room, or be therein while he is present, he shall forfeit sixpence to the fund, besides immediately leading her out, under pain of forfeiting his right to any part of the subscription, or common stock of this society.

21. If any member be cast into prison for debt, he shall not be allowed to pay any subscription or forfeitures, nor receive any part of the society's property while in prison; when he comes out he shall be received again as a member without cost or charge.

22. The clerk shall be allowed the same benefit from the box as any other member of



this society, without being subject to pay any money towards it, except for forfeits.

23. The cash and minute books to be bought out of the common stock, and also to be renewed as often as shall be necessary; and the minutes of each meeting to be regularly signed by the trustees or stewards present, and may at any time be inspected by any of the members, on payment of sixpence to the clerk, and sixpence to the common fund.

24. Hereby power is also invested in the majority of this society, at the time of each Whitsuntide meeting, to make an annual agreement with a surgeon and apothecary, whose stipend may and should be abated, upon apparent neglect.

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L E T T E R XLIII.

NOW that this subject of the poor, their rights, duties, and the laws respecting them, draws near to its conclusion; it cannot be judged foreign to the design of this tract, although not immediately within the professed purpose of it, to throw out some observations,  
and

and offer a few strictures on the duties and conduct of the domestic menial servants of this kingdom ; they being in general derived from, and are constantly adding to, the number of those who fall under the supervision of our poor laws.

And here it should first be understood, that servants in husbandry, journeymen, or servants to any trade or manufactory, although they may properly in some instances be stiled menial servants, are not considered in the following pages ; because their conduct, is regulated by acts of parliament, and they are under the cognizance of the magistrate ; but such only as are necessary in the arrangement of domestic œconomy, or are retained for the purposes of luxury, vanity, or ostentation ; and those domestics are so intermixed in the various departments of service, that it is not easy to separate them ; as it would be very difficult in the arrangement of any person's household, for a stranger to determine, what servants are of domestic use, and necessity, solely ; and what are supernumerary, or retained for the gratification of vanity or luxury.

But in whatever department they may be engaged, they in these times are principally de-

rived from that class of our fellow subjects which have been the immediate object of our attention ; and not from a more respectable class of citizens, whose children formerly thought it no disparagement to be retained in families of superior consideration or opulence.

In those days, the tenantry of the kingdom thought that a son or daughter, who was retained as a menial servant in a house of wealth and consequence, was placed in a respectable situation ; and the best principles of honesty, sobriety and civility were inculcated, that their children might preserve themselves in those situations, which the good conduct and reputation of their parents had obtained for them.

In those days the *kinder* duties of master and servant were reciprocally performed ; the servants on their parts strove for the good-will of those they served, by diligence, honesty, sobriety, regular behaviour, and attention to the interests of their immediate retainer ; by an œconomic use of such property as they were intrusted with ; and they were rather humble friends than eye-servants ; and they received, exclusive of their wages, their diet, their lodging, and such part of their clothing, as they agreed for, the advice, the encouragement, the protection,  
the



the friendship of their employer ; and seldom changed their place, but when they changed a life of servitude for a life of independence ; this reciprocity of duties and affections is beautifully exemplified by Shakespear in his Orlando and Adam :

*Adam.* Master, go on, and I will follow thee  
To the last gasp with truth and loyalty.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Orlando.* There is an old poor man,  
Who after me hath many a weary step  
Limp'd in pure love ; till he be first suffic'd,  
Oppress'd with two weak evils, age and hunger,  
I will not touch a bit.

Thus these kinder duties were formerly reciprocally performed, or our Shakespear has not followed truth and nature in portraying the character of a faithful servant, and grateful master.

But does the drama of the present stage hold out such examples to our view ? alas no ! yet the stage still professes, and with equal truth, to hold the mirror up to nature, to show virtue its own image, vice her own likeness ; let us see what *personæ* the modern stage gives us for modern servants ; the entertain-

ment called High Life below Stairs is in point; no one has ever disputed the exactness of the representation, to the reality of a modern servants hall; and where the publick, by their unanimous approbation of a theatric representation, have stamped it with the reputation of being an exact picture of real life; be it allowed to argue from it, as from a fact; it is at the least a less invidious and more cleanly manner of identifying such a fact, than stepping into a kitchen, to be able to assert it as such.

And can masters and mistresses, be they in whatever station of rank and opulence it may have pleased the Almighty to place them in; knowing that such things are, suffer them to be. They can and they do; because they are possessed with fears and apprehensions, more alarming than those arising from the dissipation of their property, and which force them tamely to submit to the taunts and insolence of their liveried and pampered domestics.

The evil complained of, originates from profusion, and is fostered by vanity; which hourly submits to the grossest indignities in private, to support an appearance of magnificence

cence in publick ; after the fundamental basis of all real greatness, independence of mind is departed.

And did the evil stop among people of this description, were only the proud, the vain, the ostentatious, and those whose character corresponds with Sallust's terse expressions ; the *alieni appetentes, suorum profusi*, subject to these degrading and vexatious circumstances ; the evil ought to be left to correct itself, or in other words ; the punishment flowing from the crime, the sufferers should receive no assistance from the intererence of the legislature—they are pilfered by, and stand in awe of their servants—true—but it is no more than they deserve.

But unfortunately for all ranks and denominations of people in this kingdom, who are so far elevated by circumstances above the want of the necessaries of life, as to keep a domestic ; they are all involved in the contagion ; and suffer in their private œconomy, and domestic comfort, from the prevalence of a vice, encouraged by the great : because my lord, the nabob, or the commissary, pampers a swarm of unprincipled wretches in his household,  
who



pilfer him of his property; the most humble master in the vale of private life must submit to similar depredations, or, clean his own shoes; this is surely an evil, as it involves the innocent in those consequences, which only the guilty ought to feel.

But although we suffer, and labour under the disease; it is not an easy matter to point out the cure; the legislature seems either not to have thought it a blot in the police of the country; or it is a blot, they have been cautious of hitting; the only attempts made, were in the years 1529 and 1792, in which last year an act of parliament subjected those who gave a forged character, or stated in a character of a servant, what was not true, to a penalty of 20*l*.

This can be but of little service as the act is framed, for the first clause respects only those who personate a master or mistress, &c. and give any false, forged, or counterfeited character to any person offering as a servant.

The second clause, goes only to those who shall assert that a servant has been hired for a period or station other than such period or station as he or she has been hired in.

The

The third, to those who shall assert that a servant was discharged at any other time, or had not been hired in any previous service, contrary to the fact: and there are no other clauses respecting giving characters of servants.

The fourth and fifth clauses respect only the persons who offer themselves as servants, pretending to have served where they have not, or, offering themselves with a false certificate, or who shall alter a certificate, or having been in service before, shall pretend the contrary; the remaining clauses affix the penalty, point out the mode of conviction, and the distribution of the penalty when recovered.

Had the legislature probed the foul wound to the bottom, they would have discovered that no lenient application can be equal to a cure; nothing short of making a breach of trust in the instance of menial domestic servants, a felony, will stop the contagion; this was done in 1529; but those instances where the value of the goods embezzled did not exceed forty shillings, which are at least equal to ten pounds of the present money, are not subject to the act; and it is well known, the depredations of servants are generally composed of a mass of  
minutiæ

minutiæ, such as victuals, wine, beer in small quantities ; each item being individually of small value, and the act of embezzling difficult of proof, but easy to commit, and that facility of commission, arising from a necessary confidence reposed in the servant, to enable him to do the duties of his place, for the performance of which, he is hired at the price of his food, cloathing, and considerable wages ; therefore an act of parliament constituting a single instance of embezzlement of the property of his employer felony, be the value what it may, would have the same effect as those statutes, which make it felony, to steal a trifling value in property, which, necessarily from the nature of it, lies exposed to depredations ; or probably the putting the property of people, with respect to their servants, on the same footing as wood, turnips, cabbages, &c. are placed with respect to people stealing them ; for the first offence, on summary proof before a magistrate, commitment to the house of correction for a limited time, and the second offence felony ; if followed up, by treating the concealment, by the master or mistress, of such breach of trust, as a misdemeanor, indictable at the quarter sessions,



sions, of which concealment, a character given for honesty, and proof of the master or mistress knowing at the time that the servant had been guilty of a breach of trust, shall be held sufficient to convict such master or mistress; such a regulation would probably have some effect.

But there ought to be established by universal opinion among all those who retain any menial servants, a sense of rectitude, and point of honour, with respect to the characters which are given of servants; the line of truth to be pursued, should be that plain and comprehensive one described in the *voir dire* of a witness at the bar of a court of justice; if the character of a servant is requested and is granted; that character, with respect to his honesty, and sobriety, the material points of his moral conduct, should contain *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*; the giver of the character should speak of the servant as he is, nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.

During the halcyon days of peace and prosperity, the minister showed his attention to those in the middling ranks of society, by  
relieving

relieving them from the duty on female servants; it was well done, both because the tax was not productive, and because it was unpopular; should the present necessary war we are engaged in, rage throughout another campaign, of which there is but little doubt; surely somewhat might be raised for the revenue, from the number of our countrymen, and women in service, who certainly may be said to be better fed, than taught; by a percentage upon their wages, to be retained by their master or mistress, accountable to the collectors of the servants tax, on any servants leaving their places within a year; a less percentage if within two years; unless the persons who retained them, either break up house-keeping, or actually and bona fide reduce the number of their servants, or are convicted, summarily before a magistrate, of personal ill usage, or refusal to pay wages; and this idea, with respect to the justice of it, may be supported on the following generally allowed fact; that no master or mistress, willingly changes servants; with respect to livery servants, a change is a real and considerable expence, besides the disagreeable circumstance of introducing

cing strangers into a private family ; therefore it in general is the fault of the servant.

Disputes between masters and their servants, in a variety of trades and manufactures, are by various acts of parliament referred to a justice of the peace ; and as these acts have encreased in number and in extent of operation from an early part of the reign of Charles the second, to the present time ; we are at least justified in saying, that they have had the advantage of experience, and have proved serviceable.

What is the reason, that an act of parliament, framed on principles similar to that for regulating disputes between masters and servants in husbandry, and adapted to the situation of menial servants, hired for the purpose of domestic arrangement, in private families, should not be tried ? I confess myself unable to see the objection.

Were the servants, who are retained in the families of individuals, of the same class and description of people they formerly consisted of, did they proceed from the cadets of the best families in the kingdom ; were they now, as formerly, in the families of our nobility, the younger children of respectable houses ; or did they



they in general proceed from the tenantry of the kingdom ; and assisted now, as they did then, by being domesticated in the house of their immediate superior, to preserve the chain of connection, which, in the time of the feudal tenures, subsisted from the cottage to the throne ; there would then be no occasion to restrain their conduct by severe laws of the state ; their actions would then be under the inspection of their immediate superior ; to whom in those times, they were accustomed to look up, as to a patron and protector ; but such connections, and such habits, have passed away with the system which familiarized them to our ancestors ; and our present army of domestics arises from a different quarter, is endued with different principles and ideas ; and for the safety of our property, and the peace of our families, requires coercion and correction with a different hand ; it is not principle, but fear, which must now keep them honest ; it is not affection, but interest, which can insure their civility ; and gratitude will no longer preserve their fidelity

At the same time, as these strictures are thrown out, with respect to a necessary interference

ference of the legislature in the regulation of the conduct of menial servants; which, in these days of liberality and licence, may seem to some as founded on a harsh or illiberal principle; but which in fact flow from the necessity of the case, which calls aloud for the licentiousness of bad servants to be restrained, and their peculations to be repressed; it is but right to observe, that good servants should undoubtedly be brought forward, as proper objects of reward and encouragement; the best proof of their desert is the continuance a length of time in a place, and leaving that place handsomely, and with a good character; a per centage upon all the wages they have received, after the wages of the three first years are deducted; to be paid them by their master or mistress, on quitting the service, in addition to their wages, might be the general reward, by the sanction of an act of parliament to that purpose; unless such a society, for the encouragement of good servants, as is established in the metropolis, should be generally subscribed to, or similar societies, being established throughout the kingdom; should render

such an interference of the legislature unnecessary.

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## L E T T E R XLIV.

**I**T has been asserted, in a former part of this investigation, that local inconvenience and distress, arising from the number of the poor, and the expences of maintaining them, had occasioned many districts within the county of Suffolk to apply to parliament for the power of incorporating themselves, and of regulating the employment and maintenance of the poor, within those respective districts, by certain rules agreed upon among themselves; that in consequence thereof, several acts of parliament had passed incorporating the districts applying for them; that the poor have been since governed, and regulated within those districts, according to the powers given by such acts; and that the convenience and inconvenience, experienced from the execution of  
of



of them, should be elucidated by the best information that can be obtained from the districts thus incorporated.

In consequence of this engagement, I determined to visit the houses of industry, which have been erected within the county of Suffolk; that from actual inspection, personal inquiry, and ocular demonstration; the facts respecting these institutions, the conduct of them, and the consequences which have arisen to the publick from them; might with some certainty be stated; and that some pertinent observations might be made on those facts and consequences.

Such notices as were taken on the spot, and the informations received since by letter from the gentlemen who attend to the management of them; with such also, as have by their direction been communicated by letters from the governors, shall be stated, according to the priority in point of time of the incorporating acts; and the erection of the different houses of industry.

The middle of the summer was the time chosen for the excursion; and the houses were

inspected as suited convenience, from eight in the morning until eight at night.

The following questions were put to the governors of the houses of industry, and their answers to them minuted, when satisfactory answers could be obtained, and are incorporated with the other information collected; in some instances, the governor or attendant could not immediately give an answer by word of mouth, but engaged to do it in writing.

1. How many poor men, women and children have been admitted since the erection of the house, annually?

2. How many have died since the same time annually?

3. Has any and what part of the debt contracted by authority of parliament been paid?

4. Have the poor rates in the district incorporated been increased or diminished?

5. What are the manufactures in which the poor are employed?

6. Is the sale of any of the manufactures and which of them diminished by the war?

7. Are the poor or any of them and how many employed in agriculture?

8. Is

8. Is any particular disease epidemic, or more prevalent than another, among the poor, and what is the nature of such disease?

These questions were calculated for the purpose to form some judgment whether these institutions tend to encrease the chance of human life, to diminish the poor's rates, both in times of peace and war; and also to form some idea of the comparative profit arising in these houses from the manufactures of wool and hemp.

The hundreds of Colneis and Carlford were incorporated by act of parliament in the 29th year of his late majesty's reign; and their house of industry in the parish of Nafton was built in 1757, and first inhabited in 1758.

The information which could be obtained on the spot was not much to be depended on; the governor and his wife being from home when the visit was made; which was about six o'clock on the evening of the committee day; and no person in the way, was able to give any material information; my minutes were as follow:

Manufactures are cordage, sacks, plough lines, and spinning for Norwich.



Boys, employed in spinning hemp, earn 6d. a day, one with another.

Girls, employed in spinning wool; the great girls stinted at sixpence a day, but receive for their work only half.

The dormitory is too much crowded; three or four boys in a bed, two men; there ought to be no more than two children in a bed, and one man, this number in one bed occasioned the air to be disagreeable to the smell; the same was not observed in any of the other houses.

The dining-hall is very neat and commodious.

Land in occupation by the house, five acres; two cows are kept; only one man at work in agriculture, no boys.

The poor are now allowed more liberty without the walls of the area on which the house and offices stand, than formerly, and are more healthy than they were.

The following answer to the foregoing questions was transmitted to me by Mr. John Enefer, clerk to the guardians of the house, by the order of Philip B. Brooke, Esq. one of the directors of that house.

NACTON

## NACTON HOUSE OF INDUSTRY.

THE poor are employed in wool spinning, twine spinning, making sacks, &c; the neat profits of which, from an average of the last seven years, amount to 277l. 13s. 6d. a year.

The poor's rates were at first 1487l. 13s. 5d. a year, but advanced at Michaelmas 1790 to 2603l. 7s. od. a year.

The expenditure upon an average for the last seven years, 2367l. 8s. 8d. annually.

The original debt was 4800l. is now 4400l. and will be reduced to 500l. more at Michaelmas next, 1793.

The men and women able to work, earn from twopence to sixpence a day.

The children are stinted (according to their abilities, and not according to their ages) from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 pence a day.

Very few hands are employed in agriculture.

The number of poor admitted into the house, and the number of deaths in the house, for the last 14 years.

Years		Admitted		Deaths
1779	-	166	-	46
1780	-	177	-	33
1781	-	193	-	68
1782	-	174	-	33
1783	-	168	-	23
1784	-	155	-	24
1785	-	112	-	23
1786	-	112	-	27
1787	-	108	-	13
1788	-	136	-	11
1789	-	133	-	11
1790	-	142	-	35
1791	-	125	-	21
1792	-	116	-	21
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		2017		389

The most prevalent diseases in the house have been the small-pox, measles, and whooping cough.

The *hundred of Blything* was incorporated in 1764, and the house of industry built on a rising ground in the parish of Bulcamp, about a mile from Bliburgh.

They



They have two manufactures for the use of the house, viz. linnen and woollen for shoes, stockings, and wearing apparel; linnen is made in the house to the value of three shillings and sixpence a yard, but they sell nothing.

They spin for the Norwich woollen manufactures, and have earned four hundred pounds a year.

Forty-six parishes were incorporated.

The average number of poor admitted the first five years amounted to about 203.

There are now in summer about 250, in winter about 300 in the house.

Many children are admitted without their parents.

About eight hundred pounds are annually paid to out-pensioners.

The sum borrowed was 12000l, half was paid in 1780, the whole in 1791.

The average of the poor's rates annually in the incorporated parishes when the hundred was first incorporated, was not above one shilling in the pound, which rate was diminished one eighth in 1780, when half the debt was paid,

None

None of the poor are at present employed in agriculture.

In 1781 a putrid fever raged in the neighbourhood; the town of Bliburgh lost one third of its inhabitants; this house lost 130 of its poor.

Twenty-five acres of land belong to the house; thirty acres are hired, some for the plough, some lies in pasture, some in garden.

Sir John Rous, Bart. was so obliging as to send me a list of admissions and deaths in this house since the institution, by which it appears that from Oct. 13th 1766 to Aug. 8th 1793, five thousand two hundred and seven paupers have been admitted, and one thousand three hundred and eighty-one have died.

*The hundreds of Mutford and Lothingland* were incorporated in 1764; their house of industry is in the parish of Oulton near Lowestoft, and has been built twenty-seven years.

The number of parishes incorporated is twenty-four; their income about twelve hundred a year; of this nearly two hundred arises from earnings.

The sum borrowed was 6200l. expences in building were about 3000l. The house is  
erected

erected on a frugal plan, and will contain 200 poor; for the first seven years not above one hundred were admitted annually; but the annual number now amounts to 150, or thereabouts; 1700l. of the original debt has been paid, besides 300l. a debt contracted when the house was under bad management.

The poor's rates were advanced in 1781, ten per cent. more than the assessment of the parishes when incorporated; and have not been diminished, but 300l. of the debt continues to be paid annually.

The register of deaths has not been regularly kept during the first years of the institution; but the average number during the last six years has been eleven in a year.

The prevailing manufacture is making nets for the herring fishery; the merchants furnish the twine, and it is braided by the yard.

Hemp, what they grow is manufactured in the house; but lately, the weaving has been put out.

Woollen yarn is also spun, but the trade is at present bad; therefore only such are employed in spinning wool, who can do nothing else.

A child's



A child's stint, either for braiding nets, spinning yarn or hemp, is fourpence a day; several children not above seven years of age were braiding.

Sometimes some of the poor are let out to work in husbandry at sixpence a day, their employment is chiefly weeding.

Weekly earnings of the house, on an average, four pounds.

Out allowances were last year 55l. and are rather encreasing, but supposed to be bad management, and that they ought to be diminished.

Land in occupation 12 acres, all arable; two yearly sown with hemp; no cows kept.

*The hundred of Wangford* incorporated 1764.

The house of industry at Shipmeadow, between Harlestown and Beccles, has been built twenty-six years; twenty-seven parishes are incorporated; the annual income from their rates is 1750l.; the general number of poor in the house about two hundred; of deaths about twenty in a year; amount of labour about three pounds a week; their employment spinning

ning for the Norwich manufacturers; there is no manufactory in the house.

Out allowances about eighty pounds a year.

Children are taken from large families.

Original debt 8500l. of which 4000l. is paid.

Land, 45 acres, 27 of them arable; five cows are kept.

There is no chapel, they attend the parish church \*.

*The hundreds of Loes and Wilford* were incorporated in 1765.

The house of industry which is in the parish of Melton, was erected the same year; and is on a more extended and expensive scale than any yet examined; their dining hall is very spacious and neat; as are the dormitories; there are apartments appropriated to the surgeon; and those belonging to the governor are large and convenient; the cellars and offices are excellent; the boys school and the girls school are both of them good rooms;

\* Oulton and Shipmeadow houses of industry were visited, and the notices of them taken by Samuel Brise, Esq. of Clare, a near relation and worthy friend, who accompanied me to all the other houses of industry in the county.

there

there are also rooms which are made use of as a penitentiary lodging for refractory people, and those guilty of offences which require solitary restraint, by virtue of the act of parliament, enabling these hundreds to borrow an additional sum of money, which act passed in 1790.

Their manufactures are linnen and woollen; the first for their own use; the profits on the last are considerably diminished by the war.

The number of poor in the house is between 230 and 240.

Their out allowances are large; by the last rules and orders drawn up for regulating the proceedings of the directors, and acting guardians, printed in 1792, although they seem to have limited the sums to be allowed with prudence; they do not seem to have taken care, that the number of poor who shall receive out allowances, shall be sufficiently reduced, by obliging them to come into the house.

These out allowances are the cause of the increase of expence, as far as they tend to the old system; to avoid which was the occasion of erecting these houses.

By



By a letter which I was favoured with from Dr. Frank of Alderton, it appears that the original debt of these hundreds was 9200l. the present debt is 10050l. that the maximum of the poor's rates in these hundreds was not more, including the Marshalsea money, &c. than fifteen pence in the pound annually, estimating at rack rent when the hundreds were incorporated; and that they remain the same.

The average number of deaths the last three years was about sixteen annually; the governor could give me no information in this respect farther back; he not having been in that office longer than that period.

A surgeon, schoolmaster and schoolmistress reside in the house.

There were between thirty and forty infirm and diseased poor in the sick wards; but the greatest number of them, complaining of the infirmities of age only; and sore legs, which appears to be a prevailing disease.

The poor children are taught different trades in the house besides manufactures; such as taylors, shoemakers, and are employed in those trades for the use of the house.

Three

Three poor men are employed in agriculture.

The quantity of land about thirty acres; they raise about three acres of hemp, and manufacture it; there is about an acre and half of garden, the rest pasture; six cows are kept.

The late governor, as I was informed, had considerably injured the revenue of the house by the conduct of the manufactures.

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L E T T E R XLV.

**B**EING now, as it were, in imagination, brought back to that part of the county, which produced the objects of my enquiries, by the recapitulation of the information I received; no place can be more proper than the present, to return my thanks to those gentlemen who seconded my views, by their influence in the several houses of industry, at the time, and since, by communication by letter of their knowledge, as to the particular points, respecting which their information was requested;

ted ; and also to testify, that the excellent order, neatness, and regularity, preserved in all the houses then visited, prove that their officers and servants, who produced every where, and at all hours, such instances of attention to their duty, merit great praise.

The hundred of Samford was incorporated in 1765, the house of industry was erected in 1766 in the parish of Tattinstone, and opened for the reception of the poor at Michaelmas the same year.

The original sum borrowed was 825ol. of which 245ol. has been paid.

The number of parishes incorporated is 25 ; yearly assessments, 2262l. 18s. 6d.

The rates were settled in 1766 at 2s 8d. in the pound, by the year, and remain the same.

Average number of poor in the house during four years, beginning in 1786 and ending in 1789, is 1055 ; and of deaths, for the same time, is 117.

The average number of poor, admitted from 1766 annually, could not be exactly ascertained ; but is about 260 ; the average of deaths from the same year, is 37. 9-13ths annually ; but the small pox, followed by a pu-



trid fever, has been in the house three times ; viz. in the years 1780, 81, 91, when the number of deaths was 76, 81, 56.

The poor are principally employed in spinning for Norwich ; the profit of which was, for the four years ending with 1789, £1833 5 8

The out allowances for the same years, amounted to - - 1042 8 8

The income for the same years amounted to - - 11154 3 3

The expenditure for the same years amounted to - - 11144 8 5

There are at present eleven packs of top work valued at above 300l. left unfold, by reason of the stagnation of the Norwich trade.

Only two men, and three boys, are at present employed in husbandry.

The officers of the house are a surgeon, chaplain, governor, matron.

Land belonging to the house, 36 acres.

No sick in the infirmary.

In the dormitories, which were large, there were two or three windows opposite to the general

general range, which have great effect in keeping the rooms airy and sweet.

Most of the particulars of this house of industry, and also of the following house at Barham were communicated to me, by the Rev. Mr. Grant, the clergyman of Tattingstone; who very laudably interested himself in putting the Tattingstone house into a similar train of management, as Barham; about the year 1790, when the management of the former appeared to be unprofitable.

The hundreds of Bosmere and Claydon were incorporated in 1765, the house of industry was erected in 1766, in the parish of Barham, and opened for the reception of the poor in October the same year.

The original sum borrowed was 9994l. of which 7294l. has been paid.

The number of parishes incorporated is 35.; the yearly assessments, 2561l. 4s. 10d. the rates remain the same.

The number of poor in the house for six years ending in 1792, was 1332.; the number of deaths, during the same period, amounted to 253.

The number of deaths was encreased considerably in the years 1790 and 1791 by the small pox, 127 having died in those two years; the information received on this head was; that the poor were averse to inoculation; therefore when the pest house, one of which each house of industry has, was full, there were no means left to prevent the natural small pox going through the house of industry itself; the consequence has been a considerable mortality; but probably not greater than when the same disease has attacked the village poor; and its fatal effects have not been prevented by inoculation; Barham house has now two pest houses at a little distance from it.

The poor are principally employed in spinning for Norwich; their profit has been on an average about 200l. annually; but for the half year ending at Midsummer 1793, only 72l 1s 8d

Their income has amounted for seven years	
ending 1792 to	- - £203 18 6 11
Their expenditure for the same	
time	- - - 17680 12 9

Profit to the house for that period	2637 14 2
Their	



Their average out allowances for four years, ending 1789, have been annually 341l. 9s. 4d.

Seventeen aged and infirm people are in the sick wards.

Land belonging to the house 20 acres; of which two are garden; six cows are kept.

There were in this house more women between 20 and 30 years of age than in any other of the houses of industry.

The *hundred of Cosford and the parish of Polsted* was incorporated 1779, and the house of industry erected in 1780 in the parish of Semer.

The original debt was 8000l. is now reduced to 180l. and an annuity of 20l. a year granted to a person upwards of sixty years of age.

The poors rates have been reduced three eighths, and a considerable fund remains in hand.

The poor in the house are employed in spinning wool, which is washed and combed in the house, and the yarn sold at Norwich by commission; the sale of which is considerably affected by the war, a considerable quantity now remaining in hand.

The poor when able are employed in agriculture, as opportunity offers.

The average number of paupers in the house is generally about one hundred and eighty.

The average number of burials, since the institution, has been annually about twenty-six; the much greater proportion died the first two years after the house was inhabited; which was attributed to the paupers, on their first coming in, having too much meat diet, after having suffered extream poverty; this cause has been since guarded against, and the burials have been much fewer.

The house has been free from any epidemic disease since it has been inhabited; when the small pox has prevailed in the country, there has been two general inoculations with great success each time.

When I visited this house of industry; the governor was from home; as was the Rev. Mr. Cooke, the son of that worthy magistrate, who, from the first institution of the house, to the time of his death, regulated the management of it with so much care, attention,

tention, and œconomy, as to make it productive in the shortest space of time, of more beneficial effects, than any other in the county of Suffolk ; it was from an answer to a letter I took the liberty of writing to his son, that the foregoing account has been extracted ; the observations made, and information obtained on the spot are as follow from my own notes.

The chief manufactory is spinning yarn for Norwich ; but some of the top work is wove into serge for the womens jackets at Melford ; coarse thickset is bought at Norwich for cloaths ; linen cloth for shirts, and shifts, at Hadleigh.

Paupers in the house 25 July 1793 ; men 27, women 42 ; children, between the ages of 12 and 20, twenty-two ; under the age of twelve, 74 ; in all, 165.

No men are out at day labour ; four boys, 12 or 13 years of age, scaring birds at the wages they can earn by spinning, which is five pence a day, none more.

The girls, at the age of thirteen, are put to service ; boys, at the age of fourteen.



Twenty-two packs of yarn remain in store; value about 600l. land belonging to the house about twelve acres; of which two are garden, ten meadow and pasture.

Two cows are kept in summer time; they make all their butter in summer, and buy salt butter in the winter

Only four sick in the infirmary; every thing appeared neat, the poor healthy and comfortable.

*The hundred of Stow* incorporated in 1780.

The house of industry in the parish of One-house, opened for the reception of paupers, Oct. 11, 1781.

The sum first borrowed was only 8000l. but the expence of building the house so much exceeded the sum intended to be laid out for that purpose, that an additional sum of 4150l. was afterwards borrowed; and the rates were encreased one quarter by common consent for three years, they remain now the same as at first.

Fifteen hundred pounds have been paid off in the whole, at the proportion of from one hundred

hundred and fifty, to two hundred pounds per annum.

The poor in the house are employed in spinning top work for Norwich; the wool is bought into the house; the cloathing for the use of the house is made from the thrums, ends, and nibbings, and such spinning as is unfit for the Norwich market; their best rugs are also made from these materials; no part of their cloathing is put out to be made, except stockings.

The sale of the top work is considerably affected by the war; twelve packs are left in the house unfold; value about twenty-four pounds each pack.

None are employed in agriculture at present; only two men are in the house who can do harvest work; some children are sometimes employed in weeding; all who are able are employed in hop-picking; but it is conceived that nothing is saved by such employment.

The average number of paupers in the house is about two hundred.

The

The number of burials since Oct. 11, 1780,  
to August 1st, 1793, as follows: Oct. 11,  
1780, to Jan. 1, 1781 - 8

1781 - 25

1782 - 51 a putrid fever.

1783 - 61 a putrid fever.

1784 - 51 a putrid fever.

1785 - 14

1786 - 2

1787 - 17

1788 - 15

1789 - 11

1790 - 13

1791 - 19

1792 - 18

To August 1st 1793 - 17

These thirteen years form an average of  
24. 2-13ths yearly; or omitting the three years,  
when the putrid fever prevailed; the average  
of the remaining ten years is only 15. 1-10th.

Annual income from rates, 1787l.; from la-  
bour, manufactory, &c. not less than 350l.  
annually, for the last ten or eleven years; but  
has amounted to 104l. only the last half year;  
owing



owing to the stagnation of the Norwich manufactory.

Out allowances from 250l. to 300l. annually; but these are encreasing and expected to continue so from the stagnation of trade.

There has been no fever, or epidemic disorder, in the house since 1784; although there has been much sickness in the hundred, nor were there in the house at the time these notices were taken, any of the paupers so sick as to be confined to their beds.

Number of acres 24; of these  $3\frac{1}{2}$  are arable, one acre garden, the rest pasture; four cows are kept, and two horses.

In this house, the spinning rooms, and working rooms are divided by partitions, in such a manner, as that but few spin or work together; as are also the dormitories; there are not more than seventeen beds in any; this is an improvement not observable in any other of the houses of industry; and tends much to the preservation of health and order.

A taylor and shoemaker are kept in the house.

A schoolmaster to teach the children to read, and a mistress to teach the little children

dren ; relief is given to large families by taking those children into the house which are a burthen to their parents ; the same method is in fact practised by all ; consequently the children are taken in very young.

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## L E T T E R XLVI.

A Necessary attention to the duties of a magistrate, together with compassion for the distressed of my poor neighbours, particularly for those who were employed in daily labour on my farm ; had occasioned me to visit, at times, the sick cottager, and the miserable pauper in a parish workhouse ; the situation of the first, whose narrow tenement forbad the possibility of separating the sick from the well, the parent from the children, or the children themselves from each other ; that miserable œconomy in fitting up the cottage, which too generally has denied the only bed-room, either a fire place, or a casement window to ventilate the air ; the noise of querulous children ;  
the

the stench of confined air, rendered epidemic by morbid effluvia; the vermin too frequently swarming on the bodies and rags of the wretched inhabitants; all these causes acting together procrastinate affliction, prevent a return of health, and indicate a depth of misery, which hard labour and industry ought not in sickness to be liable to endure; neither did the parish workhouse, the last sad refuge of miserable indigence, offer a less disagreeable spectacle; the want of room, and the bad management of that which they possess, occasion similar inconveniences; the cloaths, or rather the covering of the inhabitants; the improprieties arising from the two sexes of all ages, and dispositions, long kept together; the ignorance and filth the children are brought up in; and the general spirit of rigid œconomy which the contracting master of the workhouse practices, as well in diet, as in cloathing, lodging, and cleanliness, to scrape from misery, as soon as possible, a property which may enable him to retire from his disagreeable avocation, give propriety to the opinion and expression; that a parish workhouse, is a parish  
bug-



bugbear, to frighten distress from applying for relief.

In the incorporated hundreds, the houses of industry strike one in a different light; they are all of them built in as dry, healthy, and pleasant situations, as the vicinity affords; the offices, such as the kitchen, brewhouse, bakehouse, buttery, landry, larder, cellars, are all large, convenient, and kept exceeding neat; the work-rooms are large, well aired, and the sexes are kept apart, both in hours of work and recreation.

The dormitories are also large, airy, and conveniently disposed; separate rooms for children of each sex; adults and aged; the married have each a separate apartment to themselves; mothers with nurse children are also by themselves.

The infirmaries are large, convenient, airy, and comfortable; none without fire places.

All the houses have a proper room for the necessary dispensary; and most of them a surgeon's room besides.

The halls, in all, are large, convenient, well ventilated, with two, or more fire places in them, and calculated with respect to room,  
for

for the refectory of full as many, as the other conveniences of the house can contain.

The chapels are all sufficiently large, neat and plain, several of them rather tending to grandeur and elegance; there were two houses, which had no chapel, one of them made use of a room ample enough for the congregation, properly fitted up, and kept very neat; the other house attended the parish church.

The apartments for the governor were in all the houses large, and conveniently disposed; in one or two of the houses of industry, these apartments were rather more spacious, and elegant, than necessary, there are also convenient storehouses, and warehouses, for keeping the manufacture of the house, the raw materials, and the cloathing, &c. for the use of the inhabitants.

The land about the houses, belonging to them, particularly the gardens; are all calculated for producing a sufficient quantity of vegetable diet; so necessary to the health, as well as agreeable to the palate of the inhabitants.

In general the appearance of all the houses of industry, in the approach to them, somewhat resembles, what we may suppose, of the hospitable

hospitable large mansions of our ancestors, in those times when the gentry of the country spent their rents among their neighbours.

The interior of these houses, must occasion a most agreeable surprise, to all those who have not before seen poverty, but in its miserable cottage, or more miserable work-house.

In looking over my notes, I find that the affirmative neatness, which prevailed from the cellar to the garret, in all the houses, with very few exceptions in particular departments; occasioned not only a memorandum of the fact, but gave rise to a conception, which possibly lies more in imagination than reality; that where a deficiency in this respect is observable in any domicile; a concomitant deficiency, is also observable in the healthy looks of the inhabitants.

This neatness which had so pleasing an effect on the eye, was the cause also, that the other senses were not disgusted by that constant attendant on collected filth and foul air; a noisome stench; as deleterious to human life, as it is in general nauseating to those who accidentally breathe such an atmosphere.

The



The practice of frequently white washing does much in preserving the air of these houses wholesome and sweet, but the constant attention of those who perform the offices of the house is absolutely necessary; and even that is insufficient, unless the halls, working rooms, and dormitories, have the external air admitted through the windows, whenever it can be done with safety to the inhabitants, with respect to catching cold; this practice of keeping the windows open cannot be trusted to the paupers themselves; for, strange to tell! the general complaint against them, was; that they would not only, not attend to keeping them open, but if the adults, and aged, had their choice, such depravity arises from habit, they would live in that atmosphere of putrid air, which would undoubtedly produce contagion.

The neatness and *propriété* which prevailed in their halls at the hour of refection, were also laudably observable; most of these houses of industry being visited at the hours of breakfast, dinner, or supper; at times I have felt disgust, when requested to take some refreshment

which has been offered me in a cottage; a disgust arising from the absence of that neatness which attends the tables of those among whom it has been my lot to live; but no want of neatness in these houses created disgust; a breakfast, dinner, or supper, might have been eat at their tables, with a keen appetite.

Their bread was in all the houses particularly pleasant; it was good brown bread; made from the flour deprived of the coarsest of its bran; white bread was also baked for the infirm, the convalescent, and young children.

Their cheese was in general good, although frequently the cheese of the country; in one house they bought Dutch cheese, which was stronger in its taste, and consequently to some palates not so pleasant.

The small beer was also pleasant; no wonder; they bought the best malt and hops, brewed a large quantity at a time, and kept it in excellent cellars; ale was also brewed in inferior quantities, and given to the convalescent, and to those whom the governor thought proper, either as a necessary refreshment,

iment, or as a reward; and it was also distributed at stated times to the whole house.

It did not occur to me to take minutes of the bill of diet, in any of the houses, because *no* doubt has been suggested that it is not wholesome and sufficient; that in some instances it has been too abundant, may be suspected, as well from the relicts which were seen after their meals, as from the idea thrown out by one of the directors in a letter which has been alluded to\*.

The application of these facts, which have been stated, as well upon the credit of personal inspection; and information from those whose duty it certainly was, and whose inclination it appeared to be, to give true and full information upon the subject; as from those gentlemen also who obligingly communicated any information by letter, now remains to be made, to three important queries :

1. Have these institutions amended the morals of the poor ?

\* See the extract from Mr. Cook's Letter respecting the Sæmer house of industry.



2. Have they tended to diminish the burthen of expence to society attending their relief and maintenance ?

3. Have they increased, or do they tend to decrease the chance of human life ?

With respect to the first question, it may be answered in the affirmative, without a possibility of contradiction.

They have amended the morals of the lower orders of people ; if the proportional few instances of indictments at the quarter-sessions, for actions of inferior criminality, which lead to greater crimes, will prove the fact, and it does in this instance in a remarkable manner ; four inquisitions of murder have been within this twelve month found by the coroner for the county of Suffolk, not one of them in either of the incorporated hundreds ; there are 23 hundreds in the county, twelve of them are incorporated, and maintain their poor in houses of industry..

If the general good order and regulation, the labouring poor are kept in throughout the incorporated districts ; which good order is evidenced by their general conduct and conversation ; and by their observation of those laws,

laws, the breach of which may tend to endanger the lives, and diminish the safety and comfort of his majesty's subjects in general, such as drivers riding on their waggons; tipping in alehouses, and the smaller immoralities and improprieties of conduct; if such attention to the orders of society proves the fact:

If the respectful and civil behaviour of the poor to their superiors, the very rare instances of children being seduced to steal wood, turnips, &c. and to the commission of other small thefts; if these and similar proofs of good morals, unfortunately not prevalent in those districts within the county, where these houses are not instituted, if such instances prove the fact; experience tells us, these institutions have tended to reform the morals of the poor.

And the prophetic spirit of theory, had beforehand informed those who wished to form a judgment on the subject; that the effect could not be otherwise.

A large building calculated for the reception of the poor of the district, situated in the most healthy situation, with convenient offices of all kinds; the inhabitants of which are under the regulation of well chosen officers,

subject to excellent rules, all of them calculated to promote regularity, industry, morality, and a religious sentiment.

The hours of work, refreshment, and sleep, uniform and regular.

The children from the earliest age, on leaving their mothers arms, are under the care of proper dames who teach them obedience, and give them the habit of attention.

When more advanced in years, school-masters teach them to read ; and the superintendants of the working-rooms, some industrious employment; and take care that their hours of work shall not be passed in idleness; here they are generally stinted, so that greater industry is rewarded with greater leisure.

The duties of religion are expected to be regularly attended, by all the poor of all ages; no excuse being admitted but illness.

It required no prophetic spirit to foretel, that these duties, and this system of regularity being persevered in ; the best effects must of consequence ensue to the morals of the poor of all ages; and to those of the rising generation in particular.

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In these houses of industry, therefore, may be found that plan of education of poor children carried into effect, which has been in former pages of this tract so warmly recommended, to be pursued by the means of schools of industry, united with Sunday-schools.

But it should be remembered, that these schools in the houses of industry, are not general for the children of *all* the poor, within the incorporated parishes; only those whose poverty induces their parents to ask parish relief are sent here; and of those only such children as are the greatest burthen to their parents; the children of those poor who are not petitioners for relief; and those children of the poor who are, and whom their parents do not chuse should be sent to the house of industry, are kept at home; and have not the benefit of this plan of education; and it is a circumstance worthy of remark; that parents in general, from whom, to take for a time, the idle, mischievous, least useful, and most burthensome part of their family, to bring them up, without any care or expence to themselves, in habits of industry and decency, is a very great

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relief;

relief; are very much averse to sending their children to the houses of industry; from what cause, it is difficult to tell; but it is plain that no good cause can give rise to this aversion; suppose it to be parental affection, and fondness, which makes them with regret part with their children; the answer is obvious, they are sent but a little way from them; are in the neighbourhood; where they may be seen at all proper times; and when seen, will be seen in a state of cleanliness, instead of filth; of employment instead of idleness; with neat cloathing, and wholesome diet instead of filthy rags and an empty belly; whereas parents in higher situations of life, who feel that fondness of affection, in at least an equal degree; voluntarily and at a considerable expence send their children to seminaries of learning and schools for education at a much greater distance; and do not see them for many months together: much credit cannot therefore be given to the sentiment of affection; the only one, which can be mentioned as an apology for this aversion, and every other reason must be founded on a bad principle, and consequently ought not to have any weight.

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Were these institutions erected upon a plan, which would admit of taking *all* the children of the poor, from the time they are capable of being taught some employment; and keeping them in the house, as in a school, until such employment is learned; and regular habits of industry acquired, together with an abhorrence of that life of idleness, and theft, to which the children of the poor are prone; either naturally, or by the encouragement of their parents; every good which can be expected to arise, from such an institution as has been recommended, might thus be attained to, in a house of industry, at a very trifling encrease of expence, if at any; and which expence would be amply repaid by the general good effect; but such a plan, could the houses of industry receive them, must be seconded, by the Court of Quarter Sessions issuing an order, prohibiting relief to be given, to such parents, who shall refuse to let their children go to these schools, when appointed to them, by the overseers of the respective parishes.



## L E T T E R XLVII.

**T**O determine the second question with certainty, recourse must be had to the notices taken respecting the fact, in the different incorporations; and it will be found that in some, the poor's rates have been diminished; in others they remain the same as at the time of the institution; and in a few the rates have been encreased; the different instances shall be pointed out, and some observations made on the facts, as they have been stated.

Blything hundred; Bulcamp house of industry; the whole debt 12000*l.* has been paid off; the rates were diminished one eighth in 1780; and as they were not on an average above one shilling in the pound annually when first incorporated, they are now inconsiderable.

The hundred of Cosford, and the parish of Polsted; the house of industry at Semer; the whole debt 8000*l.* has been paid off, except an annuity of 20*l.* a year and 180*l.*; but they have stock more than sufficient to discharge these remaining demands; the poors rate have  
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been diminished three-eighths; and the rates were very moderate when the hundred was incorporated.

Wangford hundred house of industry, at Shipmeadow; original debt 8500l. of which 4000l. is paid; rates remain the same.

The hundred of Samford; the house of industry at Tattingstone; the original sum borrowed 8250l. of which 2450l. have been paid; the rates were settled at 2s. 8d. in the pound annually, and remain the same.

Hundreds of Bosmere and Claydon; the house of industry at Barham; the original sum borrowed 9994l. of which 7294l. have been paid; the rates remain the same.

Stow hundred; the house of industry at Onehouse, near Stowmarket; the original sum borrowed 12150l. of which 1500l. have been paid; the rates remain the same.

Hundreds of Colneis and Carlford; the house of industry at Naeton; the original debt was 4800l. is now 3900l. the rates were encreased at Midsummer 1790, from 1487l. 13s. 4d. annually, to 2367l. 8s. 8d.; but from information it appears, that the rates were not more than sixteen or eighteen pence annually,

annually, when the average was fixed; and the revenue of the house has exceeded its expenditure on an average of the last seven years 513l. 11s. 10d. annually.

Hundreds of Mutford and Lothingland; the house of industry at Oulton; the original debt 6500l. of which 2000l. has been paid off; the poor's rates are advanced ten per cent. but 300l. of the debt is annually paid off.

Hundreds of Loes and Wilford; the house of industry at Melton; their original debt was 9200l. their present debt is 10050l. their poor rates, together with their county rates, do not now exceed 15d. in the pound at rack rent.

By this recapitulation it appears, that at two of the houses of industry, the rates have been considerably diminished, and the original debt annihilated.

At four, the rates remain; but a considerable part of the original debt has been paid.

At two, the rates have been encreased, and the debt diminished; at the last house of industry the debt has been encreased, and the rates remain the same.

The question, whether houses of industry tend to diminish the expence of the relief and  
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maintenance of the poor, is therefore answered in the affirmative, since in two the rates are diminished, the debt is paid; in four, the debt has been considerably diminished, consequently the annual balance in their favour might have been applied to the purpose of diminishing the rates, *pari passu* with the debt; in two of the others the balances have been applied hitherto to diminish the debt only, and the rates have encreased; in one the debt is somewhat encreased, and the rates remain the same, at the low average of 15d. in the pound annually.

When the average, at which these parishes settled their rates, at the time they were incorporated; and the number of years which have elapsed since that average was settled, are considered; in some, being between thirty and forty years; and in none less than twelve, or fourteen; and compared with the proportion the rates then bore to a pound; and the proportion they would now bear, had there been no house of industry; taking the advance of the poor's rate in the other parishes throughout the kingdom in general, and in Suffolk in particular, as they are proved to be, by the returns  
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of the overseers to the enquiries made by parliament, in the year 1776, and 1783, 4, and 5, as the rule of computation, and no better can be obtained; in which returns it appears; that in the two contiguous hundreds in Suffolk, not incorporate, Risbridge, and Babergh; the *net expences* of the poor alone, had advanced from 11023l. 7s. 11d. to 13840l. 3s. 9d.; being a difference of 2817l. or thereabouts, in the course of eight years; or above 25l. 9s. per cent. an advance that brings forward the most unthrifty management of any of the houses of industry, into a state of positive prosperity and reduction of expence; it will therefore be found, that not only where the rates have been stationary, but where they have advanced; and in the instance, where the debt has increased; the poors rates have been very much decreased, from what they would have been, had the poor been managed according to the old and the common system; we may therefore with certainty apply the old adage; *non progredi est regredi*, with respect to the expences of the poor in all the incorporated houses of industry.

On the whole; although in an instance or

two,

two, originating from an improvident mode of building the houses of industry at first; more subsequent expences have been incurred than were at that time foreseen; and consequently a larger revenue became necessary to pay the interest of the additional sum they were obliged to borrow, and to support the expences of the house than was at first thought sufficient; and in another instance, the dishonesty, or profusion of the then governor, has so disarranged the affairs of the house, as to render a new loan, and consequently an increased rate, convenient; yet on the whole; it is conceived; that not the least shadow of doubt can be raised, but that even in these instances, the revenues of the houses are increasing, beyond the disbursements; the debt is diminishing; and the rates will fall even beneath that low medium they have hitherto preserved; and which rates, had there been no house of industry, would probably have risen, twenty-five, or even fifty per cent. above their present amount.



## L E T T E R XLVIII.

THE other question, whether the houses of industry have encreased the chance of human life ; involves in it such complicated considerations ; is a question of such uncertainty of proof ; a comparison with the state of population in country villages, and with the chance of human life of people of particular ages, and particular situations only ; and not with human life in general ; being to be taken into consideration ; and there being no date, with which the comparison of the facts can be made ; the tables of the chance of human life being of too general a nature ; and the facts themselves as to deaths, in houses of industry ; not being sufficiently particularised as to age and state of patients health when admitted to give an exact result ; that some general observations on the deaths which have happened in these houses, compared with the numbers admitted, is all that shall be attempted ; leaving the reader to make up his own mind, as well as he is able, from the imperfect sketch of the question

question it is in my power to offer ; to which I shall very humbly add my opinion, without presuming to dictate any positive conclusion to his judgment.

And first it will be proper to pay some attention to the situation of the poor, and their families, before they take refuge from the misery of extreme poverty in a house of industry, what are at that time their expectations of health and life ?

They are so reduced by poverty, as not to be able to maintain themselves, and their families ; and therefore they become inmates of a house of industry ; consequently, the constitution, both of parents and children, must have been debilitated, by want of necessary food, raiment, and shelter, that none can be said to be admitted in sound health ; no estimate, can therefore be made of their chance of life, in comparison with the inhabitants of villages, towns, or cities in general.

They are afflicted with disease, either parents, or children, and therefore they are sent by the parish officers to a house of industry ; the chance of life with such is still decreasing.

Children are born, and at the earliest age, at which they can leave their mothers, are received in these houses ; and are kept in them through that period when the chance of human life is least ; and much the greatest number in all the houses is composed of children.

The other considerable class is composed of the aged and the infirm, either from age, or accident ; the chance of life in this class, is small indeed.

Such are the different situations of the inmates in a house of industry ; very few poor, between the age of fifteen and fifty, are seen there ; except diseases, accidents, infirmities, or particular irregularities of life, have occasioned them to be sent there.

The chance of life, to people in these situations, and of these ages, under the pressure of penury ; although not absolutely chilled by the cold hand of extreme poverty ; would in their miserable cottages be small indeed.—Is that chance diminished, or increased by going into a house of industry ?

Is the chance of human life increased, or diminished, by being brought from an unwholesome starving diet, to wholesome moderate



rate plenty? from nakedness to cloathing? from filth to cleanliness? from cold to warmth? from the noisome contagion of a filthy cottage, or parish workhouse, to a healthy air, free from noxious effluvia? surely the answer to these questions would at once determine the point, did it depend on theory alone.

But it may be said, the question has been tried by the touchstone of experience; one single page of which, honestly recorded, goes farther towards proof positive, than volumes of theoretic reasoning; we must therefore have recourse to this best of demonstrations.

The validity of this observation must be allowed, were the facts produced of mortality in houses of industry, capable of being compared with the deaths of people under similar circumstances, and of similar ages, at large.

In Nacton house of industry the number of poor admitted the last fourteen years are 2017; the number of deaths, 384; the annual average of inhabitants is therefore 144; of deaths, 27.

In Bulchamp house of industry; the number admitted since the institution in 1766, to 1793, twenty seven years, 5207; the number

of deaths in that time, 1381; but in the years 1781, and 1782, a putrid fever carried off one third of the inhabitants of Blithburgh, and 217 of the inhabitants of this house; therefore those two years should be omitted in the comparative statement; the numbers will then stand; of inhabitants admitted in 25 years, 4725; of deaths 1064, or annually; inhabitants 189, deaths 42.

Oulton house of industry; number of inhabitants, on an average annually, about 150 the last six years; of deaths, for the same period annually, eleven.

Shipmeadow house of industry; number of poor, about 200 annually; number of deaths, about 20 in a year.

Melton house of industry; number of poor in the house, from 230 to 240; the number of deaths, for the last three years, about 16 annually.

Tattingstone house of industry; average number of poor in the house annually, for 23 years, 260; average number of deaths annually for the same time, 33; in this computation the three years are omitted when the small pox and putrid fever prevailed; the deaths in  
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the three years when these contagious distempers were so fatal, bring the average number of deaths up to 37  $\frac{9}{13}$ ths, as has been stated in the notices respecting the house.

Barham house of industry ; average number of poor inhabitants annually for five years, as appears by the notices, 222 ; average number of deaths, 42 ; in this house also the small-pox prevailed for two years, and destroyed 127 of the inhabitants ; the average of deaths otherwise would not have been so high.

Semer house of industry ; average number of poor inhabitants in the house annually from its institution, 180 ; annual number of deaths, 26.

Stow house of industry ; annual average number of poor inhabitants in the house, about 200 ; of deaths annually, 24 ; but in this house a putrid fever prevailed three years, and was fatal to 163 people ; the average, omitting these three years, and taking it for ten years only, is 15 in a year.

In the nine houses of industry which have been the objects of our attention ; there are constantly, one year with another, 1780 poor inhabitants, men, women and children.



In the same houses, there happen annually two hundred and forty five deaths; as the number appears by the averages taken.

The number of deaths to the number of inhabitants annually in all the houses of industry in Suffolk; is therefore as 1 to 7 1-3d, or nearly one-seventh of the number dies every year.

It should be recalled to the reader's mind; that the inhabitants are composed of children from birth to the ages of 12, 13, or 14, when they are bound apprentices or get services; the chance of life in this early age is such, as, in the healthiest towns, not half the number is alive at the age of 13, as appears from the tables in Dr. Price's Supplement to his Observations on Reverfionary Payments; of old people, whose work is done; and of poor, of all ages, who, from sickness and infirmity, are unable to maintain themselves; such being the description of paupers admitted into these houses of industry; it must again be observed that no comparison can be made between the chance of life of such inhabitants; and of those inhabiting in cities, towns, or villages in general; because, in the first instance are comprised only the very young, the very old, and the

the infirm and diseased; and these are also poor, and of impoverished blood, and constitutions weakened by the effects of poverty; whereas the tables in Dr. Price's Supplement to his Reversionary Payments, and in the publications of other political arithmeticians, comprehend people of all ranks, orders, and situations in life, as well the healthy and the robust, as the infirm and the diseased; as well people of all classes, at those periods, when the chance of human life is greatest, as at those, when it is the least.

The question of the comparative chance of human life, in these houses, must therefore be left undetermined by any comparison with such chance in general; and probably the question would be more fairly tried; could a comparison be made between the mortality in the parishes incorporated, before such incorporation took place, and such mortality since; taking into the account, the number of the poor of each parish, who have died in the houses of industry.

The effect these institutions have had with respect to population; might also, by means of such comparative researches, be more accu-

rately ascertained ; were it likely that such enquiries would be attended by certain information ; which probably might be the case, with respect to the comparative number of deaths, by means of the parish registers, and the books of the respective houses ; but that part of the question which respects comparative population, could not, by any direct enquiry, be ascertained ; and can only be computed, from the births and burials in the parishes ; which would afford by no means an exact result.

On the whole, this question must be left in doubt for the present ; to judge from every appearance attending the interior of the houses of industry ; no one could hesitate to declare that they must tend to increase the chance of human life, and to increase the population of the districts ; the same judgment must be deduced from all theoretic proofs, reasoning from probable, nay almost necessary consequences ; but when the comparative number of the living to the dead, taken annually, appears to be only as 7 1-3d to a unit, or in other words ; that the chance of life in a house of industry, is not equal to eight years, the fact strikes strongly ;



strongly ; and occasions the judgment upon the question to remain suspended.

But still two great points are determined in their favour ; they certainly tend to meliorate the morals of the poor ; and they also tend to diminish the burthen of the expence attending their maintenance ; that the other point is not on experience determined in their favour also ; arises from the difficulty of acquiring every information necessary to its investigation ; and from the inability of the writer, to apply, with precision and certainty of proof, such facts as he had obtained ; he still believes that this point will, whenever it falls under the pen of a more accurate enquirer, and an able political arithmetician, conduce also to the recommendation of district incorporated houses of industry, as tending to increase the chance of life and population.

I cannot take leave of this subject, without animadverting upon some information received, respecting the dissatisfaction of the poor at the first erection of houses of industry ; which broke out in riotous proceedings ; and in some instances occasioned a great additional expence to the incorporated hundreds ; the  
spirit

spirit of riot having proceeded so far, as to pull down the buildings erected, and to commit other flagrant acts of outrage ; it is a well known fact, proved by long experience ; that the class of people constituting what is called a mob ; is never collected and excited to mischief, but at the instigation of an individual, or some few individuals, who poison the minds of their uninformed but well meaning neighbours ; these are men generally of a class a little superior to the mob itself ; they are men who mix in conversation with them at the ale-houses, at the shop-keepers, and at barbers-shops ; are in general interested, cunning people ; who, under the mask of vast humanity, tender affection, and kind regard for their poor neighbours, instigate them to these, and similar acts of outrage ; examine the situations in life, the habits, the connections of these people, when their secret machinations are discovered by the effects of open riot, and mischief, and they stand the confessed encouragers of the mob : it must strike every inhabitant upon the spot, that a trifling degree of attention, to the conduct of this description of people, would have demonstrated before the fact ;

fact; that those very individuals, would be guilty of that clandestine incitement of the mob of the neighbourhood, to the very deed of riot which has been committed; and consequently it would be proper in a district, where such an incorporation is intended; to be watchful of the conduct, and conversation, of that description of men, whose interests will be most injured by a plan of this nature, and to oppose the effect of their conversations on the minds of the poor, by every means which prudence can devise, and the laws will sanction.

Was any additional inducement wanting to recommend district houses of industry; the particular situation and temper of the times would be that inducement; the lower orders of the kingdom are now pressing on the next; and the toe of the peasant truly galls the kibe of the courtier; that relief which formerly was, and still ought to be petitioned for as a favour, is now frequently demanded as a right; that idleness and intemperance which formerly feared to be observed, now obtrusively presses forward to fight; the pauper is no longer satisfied with his allowance, nor the labourer with



with his hire; the faint rumour of distant atrocities, which disgrace human nature, reaches the ear of the multitude cleansed from the blood and carnage, and assumes to them, the pleasing shape of liberty and property; the only class of men who have the power to calm the rising storm, are those in the middling ranks of life; and they are as much interested to preserve things as they are, as any other rank in the state; property is the only solid bulwark of the nation, for, those who possess it have a natural desire to preserve it; and our laws and our constitution must stand or fall with it; besides the danger lies immediately beneath this description of people; district houses of industry consolidate all the men of property resident in the county, in the same laudable plan; the preservation of industry, good order, and a religious sentiment, among the million; the few gentlemen of fortune who reside in the county meritoriously, take an active part in all the incorporated houses; the beneficed clergy resident there also do the same, and it does them honour, for it is equally their duty as their interest; so also  
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do the more opulent yeomanry of the county ; a body of men of the first consequence to the preservation of peace and order ; permit therefore an individual who thus freely declares his sentiments on a subject not generally understood, to assert, without the imputation of presumption or arrogance ; that equally the duty, as the interests of government, call on them to encourage these institutions, by every mode in their power ; let every influence be made use of by them, and every persuasion by men of rank and fortune to establish houses of industry throughout the kingdom ; they will present by anticipation of the cause, a more sure barrier to the insolent attempts of sedition, and the press of democratic violence, than all the barracks in Europe ; and they will prove a more secure defence of liberty and property, rightly understood, than the best disciplined standing army.

## L E T T E R XLIX.

**B**EFORE this subject of so much importance to us and our posterity is finally closed ; before any recapitulation is attempted of those points to which the minister of this kingdom must feel himself on every principle of duty to his sovereign, and to all ranks of his countrymen, and by every obligation of regard to his own unfullied reputation, bound to attend ; it may be proper to suggest that the code of poor laws, which regulates the conduct of upwards of seven millions of his majesty's subjects, is a vague, unconnected, inconsistent piece of patch-work, in which there is no nicety of workmanship, no dove-tail exactness of joinery ; but the original statute of the 43d of Eliz. stands like some other elegant pieces of gothic architecture in this kingdom, exposed to the eyes of taste and criticism, with a prop in one place, an addition in another ; each prop and addition, necessary most probably to support and render useful the original building, somewhat weakened by the flux of time,



time, and the alteration of circumstances ; but certainly not conducive in the manner they have been added, to the elegant appearance of the whole of that structure, whose foundation being in times past, bottomed in humanity, justice and policy, will reflect to ages yet unborn, a credit on that country, which laid the foundation, and reared the humane and necessary, although at present expensive, incompetent, and unsightly superstructure.

Our highways were a few years ago managed, and the conduct of them regulated by acts of parliament collected from different parts of the code of statutes, in a manner somewhat similar to our poor laws ; but not so diffused over a legislation of centuries ; nor a tenth part so intricate in their investigation and application ; nor a thousandth part so important in their effects on the happiness of the multitude ; but a steady light has been thrown on those laws by reducing them under one plain intelligible act ; and the roads throughout the greatest part of the kingdom are become good, without the inhabitants feeling any considerable expence ; that *lucidus ordo* which has done so much in our highways, would also do good  
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in the cottages of the poor, in the vestries of our churches, and on the benches of our magistrates ; and it is a self-evident truth ; that a system of legislation, by which all the subjects of England, and Wales, are to be guided, and on which no inconsiderable part of their property, happiness, and comfort, nay, possibly the existence of many thousands of them, depend, should be plain and explicit ; that those who run may read ; and that all who read may understand ; this is to be effected in a plain and intelligible manner, in one comprehensive act, preserving the 43d of Elizabeth as the citadel, and the necessary additions to, or explanations of it as outworks.

Another preliminary observation is also necessary ; whatever may be the rule laid down by the legislature for the conduct of the nation with respect to the poor ; it should partake of the nature of municipal law ; it should enforce what is right, and prohibit what is wrong ; and if right must be enforced, and wrong prohibited by penalties ; those penalties should not appear in the statute book only ; but in the revenue raised for the maintenance of the poor ; they arise from nonfeasance, or misfeasance ;

fance; both of them diminishing the revenue of the poor, or wasting it when raised; as soon as the sore is felt should the salve also; this may be done; not by subjecting the administration of the poor laws to a new category of penalties; but by making the old, the immediate and unavoidable consequence of the offence; by these means would the poor laws be well executed, or the revenue raised for the poor be increased by the neglect of its managers; without some specific plan of this kind, every new regulation will only be a new stumbling-block, and will bring an increase of expence, not of revenue.

A minister who wishes to make use of the height of his power and authority, to alleviate the miseries of the poor, and save his country from a long ruin, impending from that very alarming quarter; must for a time divest himself of the thirst of popular fame; or at least he must emulate a famous character of antiquity; must be *smitten* with the love of that popularity which follows, not that which is followed; the present critical situation of the kingdom with respect to foreign politics, may be suggested as a fearful, or at the least an im-



prudent time, to attempt much regulation at home ; but the regulation which is wanted is in favour of the million ; in favour of their liberty ; in favour of the revenue raised for their maintenance ; in favour of the general industry of the mass of his majesty's subjects ; it is to their ease ; to their comfort ; to the more comfortable maintenance of themselves, their fire-sides and families this regulation tends ; whom will it affect in a contrary light ? not people of rank ; not people of property ; not the honest ; not the industrious ; not the active—but if it did ; those of this description feel they had rather take the lesser ill, than run a risk of undergoing the greater ; they had rather part with a trifle than lose all—but whom would this strictness of discipline in these instances affect ? the idle, the lazy, or the dishonest only : and can a minister of state either fear the opprobrium of these ; or care whether he preserves his popularity among them ? no, he will answer with the same great character of antiquity just alluded to : *siqua est invidia in conservanda republica suscepta, lædat invidos, mihi valeat ad gloriam.*

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Permit me to dwell a little longer on this topick; permit a few egotisms to escape my pen without tainting the writer with the reputation of arrogance or presumption; I have acted some years as a magistrate, and am conscious that from neglect and inattention, I possibly may have been the cause, either that the revenue belonging to the poor in my neighbourhood, has in some instance been neglected in raising, or diminished by improper application; these are faults, venial undoubtedly; but they are such, as had a penalty attached itself inevitably to each omission of, or inattention to duty; somewhat more would have been gained by the poor in increase of revenue, or decrease of expenditure; because either my pride or my parsimony, disliking the record of the inattention, or the payment of the penalty; my duty would have been done with superior attention; in a similar manner I should conceive other magistrates and overseers of the poor would feel in similar instances; if so, undoubtedly would the execution of the poor laws be enforced by these means with greater strictness of discipline; and many thousands of pounds be saved to such of his majesty's sub-

jects as contribute to the maintenance of the poor ; and possibly some thousands of lives of the poor themselves, might be snatched from an untimely end.

If slight penal consequences, following instances of neglect, with the same unerring certainty, as the night follows the day, would have a good effect on the execution of this code, what should prevent such regulation taking place ? a fear lest magistrates should be deterred from taking the *dedimus potestatem* upon themselves, is the answer ; but no such fear ought to be admitted ; there is no occasion for it ; the insertion of a name in the commission of the peace, is now frequently solicited as an honour, and the lord lieutenants of counties, are looked up to, as great patrons of provincial consequence and power ; but duties are to be performed, and services to be executed, by all persons placed in offices of power and consequence ; and it may be depended on, that such is the thirst for authority ; that the office would be solicited, although the duties of it were to be more rigorously exacted.

This idea has already been more fully explained, and the heads of an act of parliament touching



touching the subject, roughly sketched in a pamphlet which was submitted to the attention of the public, when Mr. Gilbert's Bill was before the House of Commons\*, to retail now in this tract, a plan so little noticed when the topick agitated the country would be impertinent; because had the proposition then deserved attention, it may be supposed it would have obtained it; as it did not, the repetition of it here would be serving up a kind of *crambe recocta*, very little palatable to most readers.

But however the fact certainly is now as it was then. No act of the legislature can be efficient to the purpose if not executed; we may make laws for ever and for ever; they may swell the pages of the statute book, and serve to fill up the shelves of our library; but are a mere waste of paper, words and time, if not enforced—some means should therefore be invented, not to multiply our penal sanctions, but to simplify and render unavoidable the execution of our laws. Supposing that to be

\* Defence of the statute passed in the 43d year of Elizabeth, concerning the employment and relief of the poor, with proposals for enforcing it. Sold by Debrett, and B. White and Son.

done; we should proceed in the poor laws, just as a prudent man in his possessions and œconomy, who is master of a large family; he would in the first place make his estates derived from his ancestors as productive as possible; consequently, if he thought that the prodigality, carelessness, or knavery of those who had been in possession of them in past times, had wasted, neglected, or disposed of any, without having right so to do, he would attempt all legal means to recover what had been so alienated or disposed of; he would himself occupy, or let to good tenants at improved rents what he possessed; he would bring his children up in habits of œconomy, industry, and sobriety; his servants, he would train to regularity, honesty, diligence, and civility; he would excuse a single act of omission of duty; but not a regular inattention to it; he would punish the vicious, and reward the deserving; and surely he would not, if he had the power to prevent it, permit an alehouse to be close at his doors; he would also expect that the numerous members of his household, or at least all of them that could be spared from the necessary domestic duties of the day, which duties he would reduce  
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into as narrow a compass as possible, should attend divine service once a week at least; to return thanks to the Almighty for that state of regularity and comfortable order they have lived in during the last week; and to pray him to prolong it to another.

If those who have it in their power, have it also in their heart to do somewhat efficient in the code of poor laws, they have only to extend the idea of such a family so regulated, to the great family of the nation; the plan is plain and practicable; nay, possibly the existing code has done, as far as direction alone can go, nearly the whole business; little directory is wanting, but alas! too much executory.

If the different members of this prudent man's family here alluded to, refuse to obey, or are negligent of executing his orders; and his wisdom is so lulled asleep, by the ease of his temper, or the indolence of his habits, that he is averse to compulsion; the appearance of his household instantly changes; the example runs like wild-fire through the whole family; the peaceful scene of harmony, order, and decorum, vanishes; and he finds himself soon



placed in the midst of riot, profusion, intemperance, and ruin.

To proceed to the illustration of the metaphor, our fellow-subjects in that part of the kingdom, affected by the poor laws, are the large family of which the legislature is the head or master; a large estate has by the bounty of our ancestors been given us for the maintaining our poorer brethren; whether it may be prudent to reclaim that portion of it which has for many centuries been diverted from its proper purposes; or whether, in fact, it is just so to do now, is a doubtful point; considering that the present possessors, and their immediate predecessors, for such a lapse of time, have enjoyed the usufructuary possession of the whole, not divided with those who undoubtedly at one time had a right to a considerable portion of it; and they have so enjoyed it, neither by the fraud, covin, or bad faith of themselves, or their immediate predecessors.

But whatever may be the opinion of the nation at large, or the feelings of that respectable class of our fellow-citizens, some part of the usufructuary possession of whose revenues  
has

has been called in question; yet it is taken for granted that they are *still* individually in some measure responsible for the religious sentiment and moral duties of that portion of his majesty's subjects, the tenth part of whose fruits and personal industry they claim as their right; and it is conceived that themselves would, were the question put to them, in general answer, that such is their idea of the matter; therefore would it not be proper, that where a duty arises, a power should be there given, adequate to enable the performance of the duty; this might be done by an act conferring within their respective parishes on the beneficed clergy, an authority in the regulation and supervision of the poor, concurrent with and equal to the authority the statutes have given to magistrates, within the precincts of their respective counties: such authority in all instances of parish relief, and in many other points, where authority confers consequence, would enable the clergyman of the parish, to persuade, by strong arguments, the poor to attend some place of worship constantly; either the church, or the meeting-house of some sect dissentient from the church, if  
such

such should be in the parish, and such should be their religious tendency; and by inducements of interest, they would be able also to regulate their moral conduct, and allure them to an industrious life; the consequence would be better morals, and more industry; which would meliorate the condition of the poor, and diminish the expence of their maintenance; while the clergy of the established church might, by these means, honourably to themselves, in the line of their clerical function, and beneficially to the present and future life of their parishioners, assist to reduce those burthensome expences, which now lie so heavy on the shoulders of the laity principally; but which did, in former times, by virtue of the trusts originally coupled with the ecclesiastical estates, encumber those estates solely; this being the fact, and such their duty, if the legislature should think proper to connect authority with that duty, would not the nation have a just right to expect a beneficial consequence?

Another estate has also been left by our ancestors for the same purpose in times long since the former; much of which it is to be apprehended



hended is now perverted to different uses, by the knavery of some, and the carelessness of others; for the recovery of which an Act of Parliament\* is still in force, but not in use; this estate, therefore, ought not to be lost to the purposes for which it was left; nor ought the act of parliament to become a dead letter, but rather an active instrument to wrest these estates from the grasp of the present unlawful possessors. The third part of their revenue has been raised for their support and maintenance nearly two hundred years, and has, like the young disease of the poet,

"Grown with our growth, and strengthen'd with our strength."

This is certainly raised with strictness, and expended with carelessness; in the increment of this part of their revenue, nothing more ought to be done, too much having been done already; but in the application of it, much reform may be made; here then is another point to which the attention should be applied.

\* Statute of Charitable Uses, 43 Eliz.

The last, but not the least, arises from their individual industry and labour; here again ought the attention to be fixed, as to an object of the utmost importance, involving in itself a multitude of considerations; but they may be reduced under a few general ideas.

A man of sober and regular mode of life, of good moral, and religious principles, is more likely to acquire property by hard labour, than one of a contrary description; and the consequence which results to an individual, results also to a million; keeping the quantity of work done, in a progressive state, *pari passu* with the number; therefore if a man of regular habits of industry, will earn 20l. per annum, twenty millions will be earned by a million; if on the other hand the individual loses five pounds a year by idleness, and spends five pounds in drink, the million will produce towards their maintenance ten millions less; the conclusion which follows from the premises, is so plain, that a recapitulation would be superfluous.

Thus are the moral and religious duties of the mass of mankind, essential objects of attention to the interests of finance, as well as  
to

to the public good ; and it is not in many instances that so remarkable a coalition can be pointed out ; supposing, therefore, this important object to be attended to ; we will proceed to the next.

The price at which labour is done follows of course ; and here the golden maxim should be again repeated—"the labourer is worthy of his hire ;" when these pages were first entered upon, the prevailing idea of the writer, excited possibly by a near view of human misery, was, that the labourer had not his hire ; or in other words, that his hire would not produce him the necessaries of life, which it ought to do, and some of the comforts also ; the same doubt still prevails in some instances, but they are exceptions only ; not being sufficient in number to form a general rule ; and principally are apparent in manufactures, when the demand for the commodity is likely to be, or is actually diminished by war, or other unavoidable causes ; although it is certain that on a different principle, and from a different cause, have manufacturers diminished the prices of labour, viz. to increase the *quantum* of labour to be performed ; this they have done with  
equal



equal precision of logical inference, as dereliction of moral principle, reasoning in this manner:—A man must earn a certain sum to support his family a certain time; diminish his wages in piece-work a given time, and the quantity done in the time, will be encreased, or his family will be in want, which he will not suffer, while his industry can prevent it; by these means we kill two birds with a stone; we gain by supplying the demand, and we gain by decreasing the price of labour—so have reasoned the manufacturers; but the principle on which they, when reasoning thus, supposed the poor man to act, is now almost worn out; he will apply to the parish, rather than work harder to make up his usual earnings; therefore, in such instances when they happen, manufacture literally préys upon agriculture.

On the other hand, in agriculture these circumstances cannot occur; the demand for labour is constant, and nearly the same throughout the year; nothing therefore but individual instances of avarice in the employer are necessary to be here guarded against in defence of the poor and their rights, as far as the  
princi-

principle, "The labourer is worthy of his hire" extends ; for it has been proved in these pages, that he in general is paid in these days, by agriculture, in full conformity to the maxim ; "The labourer is worthy of his hire."

The obsolete laws with respect to justices rating the wages of labourers in agriculture, at their quarter-sessions, therefore need not be revived ; at least the interests of the poor do not require their execution ; nor indeed were they ever intended to raise, so much as to depress the price of labour ; whether it may not be necessary for the interest of agriculture, to regulate the *maximum* price of labour so as to preserve some proportion between work and price in its extreme, is worth the consideration of those, who calculate, at what rate corn may be afforded to be sold, leaving the farmer a fair profit.

The law of settlements, and the consequences flowing from it, occasion an enormous draft on the poor's rate, and diminish that part of their revenue which arises from their labour, by restraining them from going where they could make the most of it ; it is probable, if these laws were repealed, preserving at the  
same

same time, or enacting anew such restraints as tend to prevent vagrancy, the labour of the poor might be considerably more productive; and they would enjoy a degree of freedom they have a right to expect from society, if not inimical to peace and good order; but this must be touched with a tender hand; the act of parliament respecting friendly societies, which passed the last session, may possibly be found, by the experience of time, to do all that need be done on the principle of encreasing labour, by encreasing the facility of chusing a residence; yet it is a doubt whether we ought to wait for this probable, but distant consequence.

Nothing will do so much in this point as early industry; can it be supposed, that a generation of industrious adults, will arise from a race of idle children; is the adage of the poet so falsified by experience, as to prove that the tree will be inclined reversely to the bending of the twig? Unless we conceive persevering industry, and a life of hard labour, will be taken up, and the habit continued with equal readiness and facility as our necessary repasts and hours of repose; we act against our conviction;



conviction; by expecting the man to be industrious, who when a boy was permitted to live in idleness; schools of industry would effect much good in this respect; and an application of some part of the poor's rate to this purpose, is in union as well with the letter, as with the spirit of our poor laws.

Houses of industry appear from the review which has been had of the general theory respecting them, and also from the inspection of such as are situated within that county which first made the experiment, to tend to every good end; they, by the means of sound morality, religious duties, good order, œconomy and sobriety, make the revenue arising from the industry of the poor more productive, and expend less in their maintenance; at the same time, that maintenance is the result of an union of cleanliness, decency, and wholesome plenty; the reverse of what we see in the cottage; the reverse of what we see in the parish workhouse; but it is much to be feared these houses of industry must be allowed from the visibly good effects of them apparent to the sensible part of the nation, to take their stations

slowly in the land, and cannot with safety be obtruded on our countrymen by the *fiat* of the legislature.

When youth has been trained to labour by habit, and that habit has been encouraged by rewards; the honorary and lucrative spur should not cease; nor should young people, so educated, be permitted to remain stationary, possibly to become retrogressive; from the incitement being removed in maturer life, of which they have experienced the effect in earlier days; much more can be done by rewards, than punishment, and the code of poor laws at present holds out nothing but punishment; departing far from the principles of divine retribution, which while it threatens with tremendous punishment the bad, offers eternal rewards to the deserving.

The mode and the means of following so excellent an example has been hinted at; and possibly the effect may be greater than the imagination can conceive; to corroborate this idea, something may be collected from amidst the mass of human miseries which now lays waste a neighbouring country; the French  
troops

troops are undoubtedly brave, persevering, and determined; ignominy, together with the up-lifted axe strike their attention on the one hand; rewards, suiting their enthusiastic ideas, or relieving their extreme poverty, on the other; God forbid that our fellow-subjects should ever feel the impulse to a discharge of duty from the up-lifted axe; it is equally to be wished that they may experience the incitement from the fostering hand of reward.

But neither punishments will intimidate from wrong; nor will rewards allure to right; while seduction, in the semblance of articles of excise, strides with an unbounded step through this devoted country; while the financier and the moralist, the pulpit and the treasury, are at variance; and the defalcation of revenue, by a decrement of drunkenness, is more dreaded by the government, than bad morals and a dissolute people; if alehouses must preserve their ubiquity; if the village must, by means of these hot-beds of seduction, partake of the vices of a populous town, the populous town, of an over-grown metropolis; because the treasury coffers require replenishing; in vain



are all our endeavours to preserve morality; she will disappear from among us; and debauchery with his companions will take her place; it has been the case; it is so now; and the effects are visible throughout the land, although the remote but certain consequences are not attended to; here should the determined patriot strike; at this he should aim the shafts of his eloquence; not at a change of political party only, making an invective on political measures the means—all nonsense to the million; who, whatever administration rules, must live, and ought to live comfortably; let the true patriot give them the chance of living soberly, by exciting the legislature to remove from their too easy grasp, the temptation to vice; that being done, they will live industriously, and become a benefit, not a burthen to the community.

Such are the principal objects which ought to strike the attention of the patriotic statesman, as he surveys the vast horizon which the view of our poor, their rights, duties, and the laws respecting them, offers to his contemplation; if what has been advanced in  
these

these pages, has the good fortune to point out any leading feature in the landscape to his notice ; and society itself, or the poorest individual in it, receives any benefit from such an incitement of his attention ; the purpose of the writer has been answered ; he has not employed himself in vain.

F I N I S.



- Page 24 Line 7, eighteenth—not nineteenth  
 — 55 — 15, manufactures—not manufacturers  
 — 64 — 11, preparation—not recommendation  
 — 100 — 1, arifes—not raises  
 — 124 — 4, insert the words (prices of) before the word  
*labour*  
 — 177 — 15, greater—not great  
 — 184 — — bottom of the page—*in*—not sugar  
 — 192 — 8, from the bottom of the page—fellow—  
 not own  
 — 256 — 16, nineteenth—not fifteen  
 — 275 — 4, insert *is* after rate

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- Page 31 Line 4, from the bottom, insert *be* after *to*  
 — 75 — 7, from the bottom, which—not that  
 — 91 — 7, from the bottom, la not le  
 — 223 — 5, but, to be omitted  
 — — 7, produces—not produce  
 — 225 — 12, constitutes—not constitute  
 — — and—not or  
 — 265 — 2, omit shoes  
 — 276 — 4, from bottom, 16—not 6  
 — — 1, from bottom, 4—not 14  
 — 282 — 4, from bottom—1987  
 — 304 — 10, data—not date



